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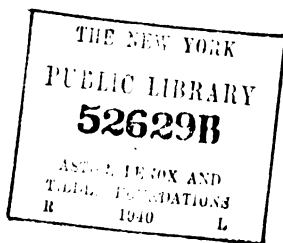
ANNA ROBESON BROWN

AUTHOR OF SIR MARK, ETC.



NEW YORK
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A COSMOPOLITAN COMEDY.

CHAPTER I.

A PRINCESS AND A PEARL.

IN the middle of April, 1898, the Princess Sarrazine came to Paris and opened her apartment on the Rue Cambon. It was, perhaps, the first time in her life that her entry had passed unnoticed by the society journals; for as Miss Claudia Ivors, of Hartford, Conn., U. S. A., she had been one of the most marked and brilliant figures in the cosmopolitan world. The only daughter of a wealthy retired manufacturer, her education and upbringing had been wholly foreign. Her phenomenal career on the Continent, where success was assured from her début at Nice, had been followed by her marriage somewhat

later in life than might have been expected. The Prince Sarrazine, however, was the person above all others to marry Claudia Ivors, and thus permit her to extend her career of ornament. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been natural in her friends to look forward with curiosity to her further triumphs from the social height she had attained, but fate denied them that satisfaction. Six months after, to Claudia's great annoyance, the prince inconsiderately died, and left her in the comparative obscurity of mourning. He left no relatives, save one half-sister, who was popularly supposed to be completing her education on the family estates near Varsovie, and the widow occupied a lonely if independent position likely to prove fruitful to a woman of individual tastes. It was too soon to prophesy what the princess would do. Her acquaintances, who knew that her marriage had been entirely one of convenience, waited impatiently until she should rise again, a social sun, upon the Continental horizon, and anticipated for her an

increased effulgence and importance. She had, besides a reputation for beauty and distinction, a more valuable one for exclusiveness; for Miss Ivors differed from most of her beautiful countrywomen in that her success had taken place in the smaller inner circles, and had penetrated even the ranks of American haters. At present, although her period of strict mourning was drawing to a close, she remained in seclusion. Her visit to Paris, to which allusion has been made, passed unobserved by society in general, although for that very reason her intimate friends took a greater satisfaction in their visits.

The windows of the princess's salon faced upon the boulevard, and flooded the room with light and sunshine. An austere taste might have found fault with the brilliant decoration, the masses of flowers, or have complained that the colours and atmosphere were enervating. The princess demanded the perfection of luxury as only the child of New England parents could demand it; she

had that eye for opulence and chastened gorgeousness which is bred by generations living and toiling in a bare, white wooden farmhouse on the bleak acres of rocky soil—in a word, she was that cultivated and transplanted hybrid, the American Beauty.

As this was the princess's reception morning, Varinka, her Russian maid, threw the curtains wide and let the delicious April sunshine play upon the carpet. She then wheeled the long chair into the proper angle, settled the tufted silk cushions, and set within reach a little table just large enough to hold a book, a little jewelled box, and a cut-glass bottle of rare perfume. Here installed, the princess further directed Varinka in the arrangement of the room for visitors, until she was interrupted by a step outside the door and a knock on its panels. Varinka flew to open it, and there entered Mr. Hugh Carnegie, her mistress's cousin and compatriot.

"My dear Hugh, how very unexpected!" exclaimed the princess, extending him

her hand. "I had no idea you were in Paris!"

"And I heard of your arrival only yesterday," replied Carnegie, looking about for a chair.

"Isn't it more than a year since we met? Varinka, give monsieur the large armchair. Sit down, Hugh; you are in for a morning's chat, and may as well submit with a good grace."

The princess talked brightly in an even voice, without many inflections. Carnegie obediently seated himself facing her, and was conscious of scrutinizing her to mark what changes marriage and bereavement had wrought in her. These, he thought, were astonishingly few.

The chair in which she lay extended made an admirable frame for her striking figure. Her dress of gray cloth opening over white was trimmed profusely with black lace. Her very blond hair, intricately twisted on the top of her head, was smooth and heavy and shone like coils of metal. She had large blue

eyes, somewhat lacking in expression, but delicately outlined by the dark brows and lashes. Her small, regular features had an undisputed if cold beauty; there was not a line to tell of her thirty-five years, and her figure was exceedingly good. The upper half of her face gave an impression of hardness, of will, which was contradicted by the mouth, small, ripe, and red—the mouth of a child. If there was a doll-like quality to her beauty, there was also distinction. Carnegie noted immediately a detail of her dress which he remembered as characteristic. Above the wedding ring on her left hand was a large pearl, and a hoop of pearls and diamonds adorned the hand she gave him. A pearl bracelet slipped from the lace of her sleeve to her wrist, and around the collar of her dress hung a superb single string of the same gems. A woman's eye, if not Carnegie's, would have seen other pearls here and there in the lace of her dress, and would have drawn the obvious conclusion that the princess was extravagantly fond of these jewels. Carnegie

knew that she owned some very fine ones, but at the moment he inwardly criticised her wearing so many at a time; it seemed to his mind a breach of strict good taste.

While he was making this survey, and talking meanwhile about mutual friends, the princess in her turn was renewing her opinion that he was one of the most interesting men of her acquaintance. Carnegie was thirty-one. His wealth had come from the same source as his cousin's, and his life had been very busily spent in his own country. The idle restlessness of the American man of leisure had never appealed to him, and though he had travelled a good deal he had always a definite work at home. He was interested in many things—in the right management of his fortune for one—and he was integrally *earnest*. He disliked society, the social round, and the society woman above all; and he had theories, though studiously concealed, on the subject of the luxurious life. He kept himself out of public view, and chose his friends among those who, like himself, were anxious

to spend their days at something worth while. There was something alert, keen, and high-strung in Carnegie's appearance. Tall and active, his movements were swift and decided, like the flash of his dark eyes. His features were good, though chiefly in expressing character. He was quiet, and had a way of stepping aside to allow another's personality free play; but when roused he was capable of very great energy, concentration, and intensity. In a word, he was a young man of active and well-trained mind, and of nervous rather than physical force. He was impulsive and at times passionate, and he had the impatience of such a temperament, but to those qualities was added a chastening sense of humour.

The princess had known her second cousin since childhood, but not intimately, and had shown a marked liking for him. Whether it was returned in kind is hard to say. It was a fact that she called him "Hugh," and that he rarely addressed her by her Christian name. But then she had the advantage in years, al-

though she would not have fancied such an interpretation.

“So you are not to stay in Europe?” asked the princess. All this time they had been talking of indifferent matters, but now came one of those pauses which indicate that the conversation is about to take a more confidential turn. Carnegie shook his head to this question.

“But why? Paris is delightful now.”

“The war will take me back. I sail on Saturday. I am to have some work in connection with it.”

He wondered as he spoke why his cousin had not alluded to a matter which should have had so much interest for them both.

“Ah, yes; the war, of course,” she answered vaguely; “a ridiculous business, isn’t it?”

“Not in my opinion,” he said quickly; “I should say a very important one.”

“You were always patriotic,” said she indulgently; then in a tone of more animation, “It’s unlucky for me—this war, Hugh. I

wanted to spend the summer in Norway, but they say I shall have to come home myself. No one knows what might happen, and I must have an eye to my affairs."

Carnegie assented.

"I think," she continued, "that I will sail the last of May and spend June attending to business. Are there good hotels in New York?"

His lip twitched under his moustache. "You might find a passable one."

"I've been away so long," said the princess sweetly, "and it has all changed so much, they tell me. Then I shall open the Château Gui and go up there for the summer."

"I'm delighted to hear it," Carnegie said heartily. "The Château Gui has been too long closed. After all, it is a unique spot—the only one of its kind in the United States."

"Absurd to call it a château," she said, "when I suppose it is a howling desolation."

"That was the old name, and the house is quite imposing. I went there with my father years ago, when I was quite a boy.

We camped out on the ground floor. I assure you, princess, it is quite fairly picturesque and a delicious climate. You will spend a very pleasant summer."

"I dare say"—her voice was not enthusiastic—"at all events it will be a novelty. And I'm not afraid of Spanish privateers, though it is on the sea."

"Spanish privateers? Nonsense!" exclaimed Carnegie. "Who has been telling you fairy tales? It means nothing to any one who knows anything of the real state of affairs. Oh, no! You will be quite free from danger of that sort."

"I may count on you for a visit, may I not? It will be rather lonely, but I think you might enjoy it. There is fishing;" and she smiled upon him, showing her white teeth.

He replied eagerly, "I'd like nothing better, but it is too far off to say positively. By July I may be in Cuba, and you, princess, making bandages for the soldiers."

She gave a grimace. "You won't go and fight, Hugh?"

"Not unless it is necessary. My work will be at home, I fancy."

She looked at him, half puzzled, half disdainful; and he did not pursue the subject. He was heart and soul interested in the war and the problems it presented to his country, and her attitude jarred upon him. However, he waited in silence for her next remark, which seemed, from her suddenly leaning forward, to be of some importance. Her expression had become quite animated.

"By the way, there is a matter in which I shall want your help," she said, playing with the string of pearls at her throat. "When I get to New York I shall have to see about an investigation—private, you know—in which I must have advice. It's"—she dropped her voice—"this affair of Tatiana Sarrazine, you know."

"I'm afraid I do not know. Anything serious?"

"Did they never tell you? It must have been well hushed up. It's an odd story; most unpleasant," she sighed, half closing her eyes

wearily. "What I went through!" she added with a gesture.

"I seem to remember the name," began Carnegie; but she cut him short, saying, "I will tell you all about it. Is Varinka in my room there?"

Carnegie rose, and, seeing the maid at work near a window in the bedroom, closed the door between and returned to his chair. He was interested in Claudia's confidences, but he also wondered at them, for he had never taken pains to conceal what he thought of her marriage. His opinion of Sarrazine had been definite and uncomplimentary.

"You knew that my husband had a half-sister?" the princess began.

"I heard of her, certainly, but never met her. I was not at your wedding, remember."

"Nor she," said Claudia briefly. "I never met her either, and now I dare say I never shall. Don't look so astonished; you shall hear. At the time of my engagement this girl, Tatiana, was nearly twenty-one. Her mother was an Englishwoman—Miss Gre-

ville—and she had left Tatiana an independent fortune. The old prince's death, when she was eighteen, of course delayed her introduction into society, and Sarrazine was in no hurry to present her. She lived quietly at Varsovie under the care of an American governess—a Miss Page, whose influence my husband much disliked. He intended to get rid of this woman in the near future and arrange a proper marriage for Tatiana. Meanwhile she lived like an English girl with her horses and dogs. I believe she was clever, and they tell me she was something of an artist. But she had far too much liberty for a girl in her position—that was the fatal mistake.”

“What happened?” asked Carnegie, interested.

These memories did not seem to affect the princess, and she continued: “For some reason Tatiana took a dislike to me, and refused to be present at the wedding. Sarrazine was annoyed, but the child was perfectly defiant; she had been encouraged, you see. Of

course they quarrelled, and the governess was dismissed, and Sarrazine was arranging a suitable match for Tatiana when he fell ill in Paris. During the anxiety of his illness and all that, followed by the journey home, I forgot that Tatiana's twenty-first birthday had passed. But when I reached Varsovie with poor Sarrazine I was told that Mademoiselle la Princesse Tatiana had left—eloped—disappeared!”

“Upon my word,” ejaculated Carnegie, “how very extraordinary!”

“Heartless, was it not?” commented the princess in her even voice.

“But did she leave no explanation?”

“She left a letter for me”—the princess gave a slight shrug. “It said—oh, very frankly, I assure you!—that she disliked the life which had been planned for her, and refused the match arranged for her. She intimated that she did not think she would like me. She informed me that legally she was a free agent, so that she had determined to become an artist, and had departed quiet-

ly 'in order to avoid painful and useless discussion.' And finally, Hugh, she begged my pardon for her seeming want of respect, writing that as she had only seen Sarrazine twice during the last six years she could hardly be expected to feel any great affection for him."

"What a determined young lady!" said Carnegie, much amused. He felt a sympathy for the writer and her frankness. "What did you do?"

"There was nothing to do but hush up the scandal at once. She had money, and she also had talent; I had no authority over her. And, like herself"—Claudia's voice rang light and hard—"I couldn't be expected to feel any affection for a girl I had never met."

"But all this was a year ago. Have you never discovered her?"

The princess shook her head and played with her pearls.

"You have no trace?"

"Oh, she sailed for America, of course," said the princess quickly, "but I know nothing more. At first I thought it was the gov-

erness, but we heard some time ago that the woman was dead of typhoid fever. So then I began to think it was some low love affair."

"Oh, no; I'm sure you're mistaken!" cried Carnegie, shocked by the idea. "Surely not that, princess!"

"Why not?" She raised her eyes coolly to his. "She was entirely at liberty; depend upon it there was a man. That nonsense about an artistic career and freedom! My dear Hugh, when a girl talks about freedom she always means a man!" She ended with a short satisfied little laugh, against which Carnegie inwardly protested. He could not have told why he was so sure that she was wrong.

"I feel sure it was nothing of that sort," he repeated uncomfortably, adding, "You think she is in New York, and want to find her?"

"Yes; there are one or two matters, family matters, I must find out from her. Of course, Hugh, I don't take a sentimental

view of the affair, and should never induce her to return. She has done for herself socially now, and would only be a drag on me. Still——”

“Still——” he echoed; then abruptly, “Her mother died long ago?”

“When she was a baby,” Claudia answered, surprised. “What has that to do with it?” He did not reply, and she resumed: “Yes; I want an interview with her, if possible. Do you think you can help me?”

“I will do my best,” agreed Carnegie, recalling himself; “it ought not to be so hard.”

“You can imagine the strain all this has been!” and she half closed her eyes again, letting her hand drop expressively in her lap. “Really, when I think——” she paused, expecting a sympathetic rejoinder, but was disappointed.

Carnegie, for his part, felt an inadequacy in the above account and the attitude toward it of this beautiful woman. He dismissed it forcibly from his mind by an ab-

rupt and personal turn to the conversation. "Do you know, Claudia," he said, "that I have rarely seen you looking better?"

The princess might not have smiled so graciously upon him for this speech if she had known it was a deliberate effort on his part to cover his lack of sympathy. He never talked with Claudia on any subject that he was not sooner or later compelled to force the conversation back into the personal, in order to keep in touch with her. There is no more fatal indication of incompatibility. The princess should have sighed, but instead she smiled and changed the subject briskly.

"I've had such a disappointment lately, Hugh!"

"What? Some jewels you want and can't get?"

"How clever you are!"—she patted him on the arm—"but I always said so! Yes—such a chance! One in a lifetime, but away beyond my means. Wait, I'll show it to you." She sprang from the chair, crossed the room rapidly to her writing-desk, and

took something from an inner drawer, saying, as she did so: "It seems a risky place, but I had no other, you see."

Carnegie had risen also and watched her as she deposited on the small table an ordinary tin cash-box. He was inclined to smile at the reverential touch with which she unlocked it and drew forth a still smaller box of cardboard. Knowing her passion, he prepared to rhapsodize over some fine and costly gem, but was wholly unprepared for the object which she disengaged from the cotton wool and held out to him on her palm. It was an enormous pearl, flawless in surface, wonderful in light. The skin gleamed with soft, iridescent bloom, and, lying in the princess's hand, the thing looked the size of a small Seckel pear. Turning it over delicately, he saw that the smaller end of the pearl was pierced through. A sudden recollection rushed over him. "The pierced pearl of Aguiras!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

"You know it?" she asked, amazed.

"There is not another such pearl in the

world. Do you mean to tell me it is for sale?"

The princess nodded. "And I can't buy it!" she cried despairingly.

"But it is worth a fortune! What do they ask you for it?" She named a sum, and Carnegie whistled.

"I wouldn't buy it, of course," said he; "but that is cheap, much less than its worth. This is immensely interesting, for of course the sale is authorized by the Spanish Government. I knew they were hard up, but I didn't dream to this extent! It's a good indication of their financial situation for this war!"

"I suppose so"—this aspect of the question evidently did not interest her—"but why wouldn't you buy it, Hugh, 'of course'?"

Carnegie laughed. "In the first place, I'm an American citizen," said he, "and I don't propose to help the enemy with my good Yankee money."

"Oh, but that's nonsense!" said she carelessly.

"Perhaps!" he raised his eyebrows slightly as he spoke; "but, apart from the fact of war, I don't think I should invest in so dangerous a jewel."

"Dangerous? How? What do you mean?" she demanded eagerly, her cold blue eyes lighted.

"Because the title is not clear. You do not know the story of the pierced jewel of Aguiras, then? I am glad I can tell you that it would be a most unsafe investment."

"But why?"

"Simply because it does not rightly belong to the Spanish Crown at all, but to a private individual, who is determined to regain possession of it at any cost. The Spanish Crown is better able to fight him than you."

"I never heard a word of all this!"

"It's not a long story. The pearl belonged to a certain General Aguiras y Copete, and had been given him during a campaign of the last century by a prisoner as a token of gratitude. Aguiras was a good soldier and

a fine old Don. He returned to Madrid out of favour with the Crown, but much beloved of the people. The pearl was seen on his daughter's neck, and it was intimated to Aguiras that if he made a gift of it to his sovereign he would be restored to favour. He had the hardihood to refuse, and not long after it was stolen out of his house in such a manner as to leave no doubt that its destination was the royal vaults. If the old general had not been so beloved by the populace the theft would doubtless have been more formal. As it was, he fought all the rest of his life for its recovery, and died in exile in Cuba. His son did the same, and died in the first Cuban insurrection. I happen to know his grandson, Juan Aguiras, a member of the Cuban Junta. No man is fiercer against Spain than he. So you see, this is a historical bit of 'loot,' princess, and might prove an uncomfortable possession."

Claudia looked at him during this story, and when he made an end, transferred her gaze to the pearl in her hand, touching it

lovingly. Then she replaced it, locked the cash-box, and returned it to her desk, all in silence. She spoke only after she had returned and seated herself once more in the long chair. "I can't possibly buy it," she said slowly; "but your tale would not deter me. I would give my little finger for that jewel, Hugh!"

"Even if it were aiding the enemy?" He spoke earnestly, struck by the cold vehemence of her manner.

"Oh, that wouldn't influence me!" She made a gesture of dissent. "Don't let's talk about it—it makes it worse!"

The inevitable parting of their sympathies had been reached, and Carnegie, to whom her desire seemed silly and disproportioned, rose to take leave.

"You will come again?" she asked him.

"I fear not. You see, I sail on Saturday."

"Then we shall meet in America. And I shall insist on a visit in July at the château."

"I should like nothing better, but I must not promise. I may have work to do."

"How stupid! What sort of work?"

"I have applied for a job connected with our coast defence," replied Carnegie, looking down at her hand on his arm; "a private inspectorship, I suppose one would call it. I've been studying the subject lately, and can almost call myself an expert. It is an important problem for us, and I am going to make a thorough survey with reports—a branch of 'secret service,'" he added, seeing that she neither understood nor appreciated what he was saying.

"The war may be over by July. So, au revoir, Hugh!" And she gave his hand a warm pressure.

Carnegie reflected on this cousinly kindness of hers on his way downstairs, and a smile flickered into his eyes. He had always suspected Claudia Ivors of egregious vanity, and did not see fit to alter his judgment on the Princess Sarrazine. Still, he had enjoyed an interesting visit. He was so absorbed in

the thoughts it raised that in descending he ran against a foreign gentleman who was coming up. Profuse apologies on both sides followed; the foreign gentleman went on up the stair, and Carnegie came out upon the street and turned toward the Rue de Rivoli. The little encounter at once left his mind, although he had cause to remember it later.

CHAPTER II.

MR. CARNEGIE ARRIVES.

LATER in the same year Carnegie often reflected on the slight thread which bound him to the extraordinary business of the Château Gui. He came to consider the interview with the Princess Sarrazine in Paris as introductory to the later drama, wherein he was to play so prominent a part. Every national or international event entangles with it a number of private lives and histories, each in itself worthy of observation. So the greater drama controls the less, like the play in Hamlet, subordinate perhaps in importance, but fraught as full as the main theme with infinite possibilities of emotion and action. When the Spanish-American war is mentioned to Carnegie it recalls to his mind not Dewey's victory, nor the flight of Cer-

vera, nor the Merrimac episode, but instead his own little stage and scene, the weeks of bewilderment, the hours of tense excitement, of adventure, of emotion, of swift, fierce action, all shining against the background of the gray house facing seaward. From the day of his arrival as Claudia Sarrazine's guest to the day when he so strangely left her roof, he is accustomed to think of that interval as the most important and picturesque in his life. At the time it passed unappreciated. He went to the Château Gui in the last week in June for a rest and a holiday after two months' hard study on the subject of our coast defence. It was his own fault that he did not get this rest; even if he did not later see cause for regret.

Carnegie left Bar Harbor in his own yacht, the *Señorita*. During the last six weeks he had lived on this craft, which, if not a floating palace, contained at least every comfort for her owner. The *Señorita* had been built for him the winter before, and he had refused Government offers for her, judg-

ing that she would be useful to him in his own work. Her engines were of the best, and since the breaking out of war Carnegie had ruthlessly sacrificed a part of her pretty interior for coal. He had an excellent sailing master and crew, and the yacht had shown herself, in his various working trips, swift and seaworthy. She was not large, nor was she especially luxurious, but she had the perfection of mechanical outfit. It was more than twenty-four hours after losing sight of Mt. Desert that he came in sight of Shattogie Point. It will be readily understood that the name which Carnegie and the princess gave to the house on this point was not the one generally employed. The corruption, as written above, was in common use until the father of Claudia Sarrazine, inheriting the property from an uncle, discovered and revived the original title. The place might remain "Shattogie House on Shattogie Point" to all New England; Mr. Ivors and his family never used any but the old form. To many persons a château on the

New England coast was in itself an anachronism, but the age and size of the house gave it a reasonable right to the title. It had been erected and owned by a French seigneur of the time of Louis XIV, fell into English hands, and thence purchased by the Ivors family. For many years, on account of distance, inaccessibility, and their absence in Europe, it had been untenanted and neglected. The position of the Château Gui was unique, and for the understanding of what follows must be described with some particularity. The house stood facing the Atlantic on a miniature peninsula thirty acres in extent—rocky, and well-wooded on the high ground with good-sized pine trees. The side of the peninsula toward the bay was lower, the ground extending in a slope of lawn, fringed by a thick belt of alder bushes, which hid the sea on this side from the house. An isthmus half a mile long connected the peninsula with the mainland, which was very mountainous and abrupt. On one side was the open sea, on the other a narrow, long, irregular bay,

forming a tolerable harbour for small boats and protected at the upper end by the steep mountain slopes. This region was wild forest where game abounded. Across the isthmus the coast drew away in low meadows sloping to a sandy beach, above which the land was fertile and where lay the farm belonging to the house. The place was totally isolated from postal or telegraph facilities, a fact at first so delightful and later so maddening to Carnegie. During his visit the mail came daily by sailboat from the post office some six miles around the point. Telegrams were despatched by the same means to the same place, where a carrier drove them to the nearest telegraph line, seven miles over the mountains. After the hurry of the past weeks Carnegie looked forward gratefully to this out-of-the-way place and its inaccessibility.

The afternoon was clear and warm as the Señorita drew up to the old stone wharf, through the blue sparkling water. From her deck Carnegie saw a figure in white with a

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parasol cross the lawn, and he waved his hat joyously. Ten minutes later his hostess appeared through the alder bushes and greeted him on the wharf, where he stood superintending the landing of his baggage. Evidently the air agreed with the Princess Sarrazine. Dressed exquisitely, and shielding her head with a fluffy white chiffon sunshade, she looked better than he had even seen her.

"You must prepare for a quiet visit, Hugh," she told him. "I have a friend with me, but his stay is uncertain. How brown you are! Your work does not seem to have tired you."

"I'm glad to have a holiday, just the same," replied Carnegie. "But what shall I do with these things?"

"Bolislas will take them. He is coming now," and following her glance Carnegie saw a couple of men servants approaching. There was nothing to wait for, so the Señorita cast off and moved up the bay to find a safe anchorage. Her owner and his hostess walked up to the house talking briskly, the guest

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observing everything around him with interest.

The house was a large one, three stories in height, built of granite blocks. It had no architectural features of note, but in style had a suitable simplicity and amplitude. A piazza had been added, and an expert gardener had evidently tended the beds of brilliant nasturtiums and geraniums which bloomed against the gray stone. At the back the building extended in two wings, separated by a paved court. It had originally the form of an L. The second wing, added later, contained billiard-room, dining-room, pantries, etc., and upstairs several bedrooms of more modern arrangement.

Not the least curious feature to Carnegie was its present luxurious completeness. The suave French servants, the drawing-room with its piano, pictures, knickknacks, and vase of flowers, such a detail as the silver candlesticks on the hall table, were hard to reconcile with his memories of the place. In this room he remembered camping—a bleak,

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dusty, deserted chamber, swept only by the sea wind, where, rolled in his blanket, he had passed a night on the very hearth where the princess's tea-table now stood, gleaming with its samovar and accessories in polished silver and glass.

"How on earth did you manage it?" he asked. "Such a transformation!"

"Bolislas did it all," was her reply; "he came here a month ahead of me—it was all done when I arrived. He is a clever shopper—Bolislas; a most invaluable man."

"And you like it here?"

"Now, yes. At first I nearly died of ennui. But one may as well pass one's mourning here as anywhere. You take your tea *à la Russe*, Hugh?"

He took the glass from her hand, and sat a little dreamily stirring the slice of lemon and looking around at the pretty room. It had not the air of over-decoration in which her salon had offended him; indeed, she herself, in her elaborate dress, her coils of shining hair, the pearls on her fingers, was the

only object that seemed out of place. The princess talked with more animation than she had done in Paris. He found himself thinking that she seemed glad to see him, a thought that persisted in returning with an odd, doubtful significance.

“Are you right about the fishing?” he asked her, among other inquiries, and felt an honest relief when she replied, “Yes, they tell me the trout stream is well stocked. I know you will enjoy it. Ah, M. Jacoby!”

She introduced Carnegie and the newcomer. M. Jacoby was polite and vivacious, although at first sight he did not appeal to the American as a welcome addition to the party. Carnegie was far from wishing to spend this visit *tête-à-tête* with the princess; yet, to his own surprise, he found himself resenting M. Jacoby's appearance. He was a man over forty, dark, and well featured, and after an instant's puzzle Carnegie recognised him as the foreigner whom he had encountered on the princess's stairway in Paris. His hair and beard were iron gray; his light eye showed

a spot of yellow in the pupil. M. Jacoby talked much, and seemed to be overflowing with naïve enthusiasm; for so old a man he was astonishingly fresh and fervent in his views. He spoke excellent and most fluent English, and when the conversation turned on international affairs he grew eloquent in his assurance of his countrymen's sympathy for the American cause.

"Shall we not admire valour and daring?" declared M. Jacoby. "France owes her freedom to the United States, and is heart and soul with her. I do not say that a small coterie, financially interested in Spanish affairs, may not have used their influence to try to prevent hostilities. Otherwise, princess, have you not observed our sympathy?"

"I think everybody in Paris thinks the war very unnecessary," said the princess in her even, assured way.

M. Jacoby appealed to Carnegie. "Do you not think, monsieur, that the press of your country has a tendency to exaggerate?"

Carnegie smiled, and thought it had. He

said very little, until he thought it time to change the subject. It proved to be one in which the Frenchman was interested, for he recurred to it at dinner. He talked well and with some authority, attracting Carnegie by the contrast between his evident cultivation and his naïveté of character. Carnegie determined to ask Claudia about him, when an incident put M. Jacoby out of his head.

When he entered the dining-room a moment late, the first object upon which his eyes lighted was the lace collar of his hostess and her string of pearls. With a slight and disagreeable shock, he saw swinging openly from the necklace the great pear-shaped pearl which she had shown him in the Rue Cambon. The candlelight gleamed softly against its milky sides; it seemed larger, more superb than ever—a gem fit for an empress. In a flash Carnegie's mind leaped upon the dangerous absurdity of such an ornament in such a place, realized the house full of men servants, the locality so awkwardly out of the reach

of assistance. These thoughts occurred to him as he seated himself, and kept him silent through several courses. He felt in a manner annoyed with Claudia for allowing her vanity such lengths as to carry into the wilderness a thing so valuable and so inappropriate, and determined to speak to her on the subject.

CHAPTER III.

THE OPPOSITE WINDOW.

THEY were four at table, the other place being occupied by the princess's companion, Miss Vesey. She appeared a very quiet, reserved little Englishwoman, delicately old-fashioned in appearance, with her black silk dress and a little lace shawl over her shoulders. Miss Vesey was evidently dominated by the princess, who was exceedingly polite to her, and whom she evidently admired. She answered one in an undertone, not so shy as humble, and her mission in life seemed to be to see and do just what Claudia chose her to see and do, like a serviceable horse with blinders. As Miss Vesey seemed no more inclined for conversation than Carnegie, the bulk of it was borne by the other two, and very brightly borne—an airy game of

French battledore and shuttlecock in which society, politics, art, music, and fashions flew to and fro. The princess with her placid grace, M. Jacoby with his inimitable shrugs and gesticulation, formed a couple worth watching. As for Carnegie, each time the servant passed him a dish or filled his wine glass, he caught himself wondering if the man realized the fortune which dangled within reach.

"Has time brought no settlement at the head of the bay, Claudia?" he asked abruptly, guided by these thoughts.

M. Jacoby answered for the princess. "No, it is all forest, like the forest in your writer Coopaire," said he.

"So it used to be," said Carnegie. "Strange that it remains so, when all the rest of the coast has developed so fast. I looked for several changes which have not taken place."

"It seems to me," the princess remarked, "that far off in the mountains, a long way from there, I heard there had been started a

club for artists from New York, but this is the only change I have known of."

"It is a singularly lonely spot, the Château Gui," Carnegie was saying, when he saw that M. Jacoby's eyes were fixed upon him smilingly.

"You do not like adventures—*hein?*" said the Frenchman. "Ah, you Americans do not like to be alone—far off. You like Broadway."

"It depends," replied Carnegie, a trifle stiffly.

"Ah, chère madame, if there come bandits we will defend you!" laughed M. Jacoby. "The Gascon and Anglo-Saxon will fight shoulder to shoulder! I know my friend Carnegie here, and he is true Yankee—for all his speech, bold and adventurous."

"You are mistaken," Carnegie said coolly; "I don't like danger." He relapsed into silence, thinking with relief that he had packed a revolver. Perhaps some vague recollection of Claudia Sarrazine's tastes had guided him, although he had never dreamed

she would carry them so far. He wondered how it was she had been able to afford the pierced pearl of Aguiras at the price she had named to him, and he did not believe she could have gotten it for less. True, she was a wealthy woman, but her expenses were enormous—look at the very house he was in, the table at which he sat—and his knowledge of her circumstances convinced him that she must have purchased the pearl at some imprudent sacrifice. As for the moral question involved—well, the more Carnegie thought, the more clearly he saw that there was every reason against the purchase in the first place, and an open display of it in the second. But women are notoriously foolish where jewels are concerned.

The night was unusually mild and clear, and the quartet adjourned for coffee to the piazza. The princess placed herself upon a wicker lounge, and Carnegie drew up to her side. M. Jacoby and Miss Vesey after a moment strolled down to the water's edge, leaving the cousins alone. A faint sound of the

sea came to Carnegie's ears, with the rustle of the alder bushes in the night breeze. Overhead hung the clustering stars, and the windows of the house scattered the lamplight in golden patches on the grass. At Carnegie's side the princess's white dress spread out in soft folds like a cloud. She looked up at him, and even in the dimness he could see the blue of her eyes. The great pearl swung softly at her throat, and now and then was veiled in the smoke of her cigarette. He looked idly down upon her hand—smooth, with pointed fingers, a plump, weak hand, laden with gems. They were both silent in the darkness for some time.

“So you decided to buy it after all?” he said suddenly. Her eyebrows contracted. “Yes,” she replied.

Carnegie laughed to himself, and she turned quickly at the sound. “What amuses you, Hugh?” she asked.

“Only the remembrance of your despair in Paris. So you managed it, after all, foolish princess!”

“ I managed it,” she repeated, and touched the pearl caressingly with finger and thumb. “ Isn’t it beautiful? ”

“ Very. But that doesn’t alter my opinion.”

“ You think it unwise? ”

“ The term is mild. I am astonished at you! ”

“ But why? ”

“ After all my warnings to own it, and then to wear it openly here! ”

She protested. “ Why not here, Hugh? ”

Carnegie let a distinct impatience of her dulness colour his reply. “ Is it possible you don’t realize your position off in this peninsula, with a house full of men servants—miles from help of any kind? ”

“ My servants are honest, sir! ”

“ You test it too far,” said Carnegie scornfully. “ Who would be honest with a fortune under his hand for the picking up? Really, Claudia, you must see the imprudence! ”

“ What shall I do? ” she said in a slightly alarmed voice, still caressing the pearl.

“Deposit it in the nearest bank at once. Jacoby and I are only two, and you have six men on the place. Besides, what do you want with pearls at the Château Gui? It’s no place for jewellery!”

The princess averted her face, and puffed thoughtfully at her cigarette. He could not see her expression, but when she spoke it was pleadingly. “Don’t scold me, Hugh! I will do anything you like!”

“But don’t you see the force of my argument?” he rejoined, mollified, and bending forward to look at her.

“I suppose so. Anyhow, you shall attend to it for me.” She dropped her voice to a confidential level. “And now, tell me all about yourself and what you have been doing.”

Carnegie excused himself early. On his way upstairs it was borne upon him that an element of uneasiness had made its appearance over-early in his visit. The incident of the pearl was responsible for a share, but the princess’s tone, her voice intimate and sub-

duced, her accentuation of their relation, vaguely disturbed him. He had always liked her, their cousinship had been a pleasant tie, but he had neither the temperament nor the inclination for a flirtation with her. So long as she kept the pleasant comradeship of the past he was delighted with her society, but he had a constitutional objection to meretricious excitements of this nature. At the same time, it would be hard not to fall into step if she set the pace, and this reflection caused him to utter an uncomplimentary ejaculation as he set down his candle on the dressing table.

His room was a large one in the older wing, having two windows on the sea side and one looking into the court. The fire was laid for lighting on damp nights, his trunk had been unpacked, a lamp had been placed on the desk, and every attention paid to his comfort. He took off his coat, lighted the lamp, and settled down to some important letters. It was after midnight when he had finished and decided to make ready for

bed. While undressing it struck him that the room was uncomfortably warm, so he put out the lamp, continuing his preparations by the aid of a late moon that peeped into the windows. But even after this it was too oppressive to sleep, so he stood a while at the window till the breeze should have freshened the atmosphere. The moonlight fell palely on the lawn, silvering the sea, which was absolutely calm. He watched its polished surface for a while, and then idly took a look out of the other window—the one in the court. The house was dark and silent, but the window directly facing his own in the new wing was still brilliantly illuminated. He wondered who it was that was up so late.

As he stood in the shadow looking out the window opposite was thrown open, and the light gleamed upon the paved stones of the court. He heard the princess's voice say, as if in reply to some one within, "Yes, awfully warm."

Her white figure moved away from the lighted square, and the interior of the room

was plainly revealed to him. It was her boudoir, and just as Carnegie was about to move away and pull down the shade, his attention was caught and held. M. Jacoby sat at a small table in the centre of the room facing the open window; the princess had resumed her seat at one side of the same table, so that only her profile was visible to Carnegie. The two, to his surprise, were engaged in close and most earnest conversation. Claudia had been speaking; she made an end and leaned her chin upon her hands, apparently giving the strictest attention to her companion's words. There was in both of their faces and attitudes a gravity and earnestness which aroused Carnegie's curiosity. Now Jacoby was talking, and with excitement. He gesticulated, he leaned forward, thrusting his face toward his hostess, he emphasized his words by significant taps of his closed fist on the table. Then he seemed to wait, and Carnegie saw Claudia raise her head and turn it thoughtfully, all the while fingering the gem at her throat. Suddenly, with a shrug of helpless-

ness and finality, she rose, said something, and pushed back her chair. At once Jacoby rose also, glanced at his watch, and, evidently bidding his hostess good evening, left the room. Carnegie saw Claudia stand for some moments in deep thought; then, with a second gesture of dismissal, she crossed the room and pulled down the window shade.

The little scene intensified Carnegie's nervous restlessness. He was not usually wakeful, but to-night he could not sleep. He tossed and twisted, wondering why the episode should have excited him as it did, yet unable to drive it from his mind. Half an hour passed, he looked at his watch, noted that it was after two, yawned, and prepared to lie down again, when suddenly he sat bolt upright, every drop of blood tingling. An unmistakable sound came to his ears from without—that of a door opening softly. He sprang out of bed, his first impulse leading him to the window, where he knelt, peering out beneath the shade.

The corner of the house hid the moon,

but her light gave a view of the courtyard: The door which had opened was one in the main body of the house, connecting with the pantries and offices. It stood half open, and the figure of M. Jacoby, fully dressed, stood in the black oblong. M. Jacoby was occupied in cautiously surveying the rows of windows, and as Carnegie saw the man's eye run over his own he was glad he had not moved the shade. The princess's windows were shuttered and dark.

There was no reason why M. Jacoby should not take a breath of air this warm evening, yet the stealthiness of his movements annoyed Carnegie. A guest had no business, in his opinion, to move mysteriously around the house in the dead of the night. He would give Jacoby a hint that he had a revolver, and that these nocturnal wanderings might lead to accident. Meanwhile, he had half a mind to call out and give the man a fright.

He was debating the wisdom of this when a new turn was given to his thoughts by

the sudden and silent appearance around a corner of the house of a second man. With infinite caution, like the stepping of a cat, he advanced toward Jacoby, who went to meet him in the same manner. They met just under Carnegie's window, and as the second man lifted his head from the shadow the watcher saw with inexpressible sensations that it was no other than the Cuban, Señor Juan Aguiras!

CHAPTER IV.

SOME AMATEUR DETECTIVE WORK.

BREAKFAST in the Château Gui was served in the bedrooms. The household was not expected to meet before noon, a respite for which Carnegie was thankful for several reasons. He had gone to sleep the night before very much perplexed; for not only had he failed to discover the meaning of the meeting between Jacoby and Aguiras, but its very brevity had further puzzled him. The two men had merely exchanged a sentence or two, and then Aguiras had departed round the corner of the house whence he had come, and Jacoby had gone indoors. All had been quiet as before, nor had Carnegie any reason to suppose, ten minutes later, that any one in the house was awake but himself.

His impulse in an affair that seemed sus-

picious had been first toward immediate action, and second to bide his time. The appearance of Aguiras, whom he had left in New York, was capable of not one but many interpretations. Placed as Carnegie was, it would not do to build on one. Moreover, to go to the princess with suspicions of her guest—suspicions very slimly founded—revolted him, as he had the Anglo-Saxon aversion to meddling in other people's affairs. The feeling "none of my business" moves nine men out of ten to the extent of paralyzing their action. With these thoughts on the one hand, there were those not less significant on the other. He could not forget the connection between Aguiras and the pearl, which he had been the first to point out. Yet beyond this connection what cause had he to bring forward a charge so serious against two men, one of whom was a friend, the other a guest under the same roof? If this visit of Aguiras had nothing to do with Claudia's pearl, with what did it have to do? The war—politics? Here was another mat-

ter, involving Carnegie very deeply, and which it was impossible he should ignore. True, he knew Aguiras personally for an ardent patriot, but of Jacoby he knew nothing. In any case, mere suspicion on such a subject, however formless, made it imperatively his duty to probe it to the bottom. After much consideration, he decided that there was only one way open for him to do this, and at the same time avoid the appearance of meddling. This was to find Aguiras and learn from him something of the matter. It was not likely that he was far away, and to discover him and obtain an interview without openly acknowledging his own espionage seemed to Carnegie feasible and unobjectionable. At all events, it would set his mind at rest.

He dressed, and drank his coffee, looking out upon a warm, misty morning, the horizon hinting of fog. Carnegie left his room and strolled down to the drawing-room, looking well about him as he did so. The only person he found was Miss Vesey, who was ensconced in a shady corner of the piazza

with some embroidery in her hand. "You are stirring early, Mr. Carnegie," said she, as, lifting his hat he bade her a bright good morning. "Shall I tell the princess?"

"Oh, I wouldn't disturb her for worlds!" he rejoined hastily, wishing to prevent that above all things. "I'm just going to stroll about here if I may, till she comes down."

He began to wander about the place in apparent idleness, noting, nevertheless, with satisfaction, that the rooms downstairs were empty and the shutters of Jacoby's apartment still drawn. There could be no better moment for his investigations. By and by his fancy led him to the courtyard; here he paused and deliberately scrutinized the old house from top to bottom, whistling as he did so. The princess heard him, and coming to the window, peeped at him between the blinds.

"How it all interests him!" she thought, as she watched his glance move to and fro. Suddenly she saw him stoop and examine the paving, touching its outline with the

point of his cane. She smiled indulgently at him for a moment, and then went back to her dressing table, where her maid stood waiting. Varinka had no easy task that morning, for her mistress was in a hurry.

Meanwhile Carnegie, quite unconscious of the compliment which was being paid him, was well satisfied to be alone. When he bent down it was to look more closely at the faint outline of a footprint in the dusty stones. He moved slowly backward until he reached the corner around which Aguiras had made his appearance the night before—the end of the old wing, and opposite the kitchen and the kitchen gardens. A path led from the courtyard to the front of the house, turning this wing, and it was the only path cutting the waste of somewhat unkempt lawn. To trace footprints on this grassy space was of course impossible, so Carnegie crossed it leisurely till he reached the beginning of the isthmus, letting his eye sweep from side to side of the peninsula. Directly before him lay the connecting neck of land, low, narrow,

consisting of not much more than a roadway bordered with coarse high grass that edged a pebbly beach. Carnegie noted that on either side of the isthmus the water was extremely shallow; he remembered that at the time of Aguiras's appearance it had been dead low tide. A man could not have landed here without being wetted to the knees, and Carnegie had seen with his own eyes that the Cuban's garments had been perfectly dry.

Two alternative methods of reaching the Château Gui were before him—the mainland road over the isthmus and the bay on his right hand. Of the two, Carnegie felt inclined to dismiss the road. It was open and unshaded for two miles, when it reached the farm, and from there became a mere track leading over the mountains. Leaving it for the present, he walked on round the edge of the peninsula to a jutting rock overlooking the bay. Here there was nothing to prevent a man's landing, and making off in the same fashion. Low alders fringed the shore thickly, and in one place seemed to Carnegie

to be broken through. He paused and examined the break carefully. He was perfectly aware of the fact that very little use will make a visible track in grass or undergrowth; the mere passage of a body three or four times in the same place is often sufficient. Carnegie passed through and came out upon the rocks. Yes, just as he thought, the stone broke into pieces, long ledges running irregularly out into the water. At low tide it formed a natural landing place, one likely to catch the eye, and Carnegie felt as sure as if he had seen it that last night Aguiras, in a boat, had touched here. Whence had he come? This was the next and more difficult problem. The bay at this point was a mile wide, and the opposite shore a heavily wooded point. Far down, beyond where the *Señorita* lay at anchor, the mountains rose into the sky on either hand of the narrow sheet of water. No settlement was there of any kind; but around the point, six miles by water, were the post office and one or two farms. This seemed the likeliest place for a

stranger, but the road to the château would be a pretty long one to undertake at night, and there had been no wind. Carnegie was considering this when it flashed across his mind that it would be easy to take a boat round the point in the daytime, make it fast, and start from there after dark. Such a plan would reduce the route to but one mile, and would insure an unobserved departure.

Carnegie was somewhat elated by these theories, although he realized that they were based on insufficient data. He determined to explore that opposite shore, and felt confident of some result. Meanwhile, he ought to return to his hostess, so he walked briskly back to the house, revolving in his mind how he might best gain an opportunity for the expedition.

“Where have you been, Hugh?” called the princess, as he drew near to the piazza. Her voice sounded a note of annoyance. She did not like the morning glare, and the stones scratched her pretty bronze slippers. She had planned an easy, intimate stroll among

the flower beds, but Carnegie had not been forthcoming for this exercise.

“Truth to tell, I have been looking into the question of fishing,” replied Carnegie shamelessly; “I’m crazy for a chance at that trout stream. Will you let me go for the morning to-morrow, Claudia?”

The last word of this speech went very near to mollifying the princess, but not quite. “You want to leave me very soon!” she pouted.

Carnegie hated that sort of speech, and the answer a man feels himself obliged to make to it.

“Not at all,” said he; “but you forget I’ve spent weeks in planning earthworks and disappearing guns and harbour mines, and I’d like to forget them in a more peaceful employment.”

“What did you do—make drawings?” she inquired curiously.

“All sorts of things,” he answered lightly. He seated himself on the piazza step and the princess slipped down beside him. In

her thin morning gown she looked about twenty.

She smiled at him. "What sort of things?"

"Really," said Carnegie, surprised at her interest, "it would take long to tell you, and I don't believe you would understand me if I did."

"Yes, I should. I want to hear!" And she looked as though she were telling the truth. Carnegie started to give her some idea of the complicated defences of the modern seaport, warming with interest as he spoke. He used no names, of course, and dealt in generalities; nevertheless, he talked freely and fully. He had two unusual qualities for a rich man—love of work and love of country—and he had gone heart and soul into his task. He was a man inclined by temperament to speak of what was within his mind whenever there was a sympathetic response. His enthusiasm seemed to communicate itself to Claudia, for she listened with dilated blue eyes.

"How very interesting," she cried when he paused, "and how important! What a compliment to you, Hugh, so much confidence must be!"

"That depends," he replied with a shrug. "Every man wants to do his part, and they knew at Washington that I had made a study of this."

"I understood perfectly, you are so clear. I had no idea the enemy could do so much damage if they tried."

"Why," cried Carnegie, "I should think so! At Boston—" He left the sentence unfinished.

"At Boston?" she repeated impatiently.

Carnegie looked at her, not knowing just why he hesitated. But he seemed at this point to recall that this woman to whom he was talking so freely was not any longer Claudia Ivors of Hartford, but Claudia Sarrazine.

"At Boston," he went on smoothly, "two months ago, all of their new cruisers could have done us immense damage. Now, of

course, it is thoroughly fortified. But I'm boring you; let's go over and join Jacoby, whom I see there by the nasturtium bed."

"I'd rather stay and hear you talk," said she, but rose, and they crossed the lawn together. Carnegie had not replied to her compliment, and, being a woman who could not lose the personal attitude for a moment, she chose to comment on his silence.

"You have grown so reserved and cold, Hugh, of late years!" she complained, looking up at him.

"Have I?" said he wearily. "Do you want to go yachting to-day, or are you tired of the sea?"

She bit her lip, and expressed her indifference. Several times during the day she made remarks which only served to show Carnegie how hard she tried to understand him, and how utterly she failed.

The day and night were uneventful. Very early next morning he rose and made ready for his fictitious fishing trip. Downstairs he found that a delicious luncheon had been

prepared for him by Claudia's order, and he felt remorse at sight of it. He left the house, and choosing a rowboat from among those at the slip, pulled out into the bay.

The morning was several degrees cooler than the preceding, and the breeze was charged with salty freshness. There could not have been a better day to spend in the open air, and Carnegie's spirits rose. So confident was he that his theory was correct that he pulled cheerfully for the point, intending to row slowly up the bay within easy distance of the shore. Here he was destined to his first disappointment. The rugged shore, belted with large pines and thick undergrowth, gave him no clew. As he moved along, resting on his oars at every few strokes, he realized that a dozen men could emerge from this wood in as many places and he be none the wiser. He looked in vain for some evidence of path or boat landing, until his skiff rounded a cliff, and a new feature presented itself.

The land was higher here, and in a crease

between two knolls a good-sized brook threw itself into the bay. Its brown waters descending from their mountain sources foamed and bubbled among the stones, forming an eddy in which Carnegie found it hard to steady the skiff. The brook was rapid and full, its banks rose steeply, and on one side Carnegie saw distinct traces of a path.

The young man sat soberly on the thwart and thought awhile. Evidently the exploration of the bay was more than he had bargained for. He could not possibly complete it in a day; therefore it seemed sensible to take a section at a time. He had no great hope that this stream and the path he saw would lead him to news of Aguiras, but it looked interesting, and he was beginning to have a zest of the adventure for its own sake. A walk up this torrent would be agreeable, and furnish an excuse for his fishing tackle—he might get a trout or two after all. With some difficulty he got the boat up, sprang out, and made the painter fast to a tough root. Carrying his rod and basket, he set

forth up the path on the right bank of the stream, its pleasant noise in his ears. He had walked about half a mile or so, when the brook took a sudden turn to the right and he was brought to a stand.

At this point was a junction of two streams, which, flowing together, mingled their waters to the sea. The two branches differed markedly in character. The right-hand brook, smooth and placid, bore wisps of straw and timothy on its bosom, as if to witness that it came from the farmlands beyond. The path, too, which Carnegie had been following became from this place more defined and wound among the low bushes, cutting an open swath through them, which showed marks of cattle's feet and wheels. The left-hand brook, on the contrary, came shouting down the steep side of a hill in a series of gushing waterfalls. Where the two joined the torrent was spanned by a big, fallen tree, and just above, where the end of its trunk rested on the precipitous bank, appeared another fainter path, leading upward.

The question was to choose between the two. On the face of it, the more travelled pathway promised most, but the mountain track had more attraction. The fallen trunk had the look of an impromptu bridge. Carnegie stood hesitating, watching the bending trees—the gorge bathed in sunshine—when his eye caught a scrap of something white, like a piece of paper, several feet up the left-hand path. It fluttered in the wind, beckoning.

“I can come back—I’ll just cross over and see,” he told himself, smiling at his own eagerness in such a trifle, and in an instant had crossed the bridge. In two bounds he had reached and picked up the white object. It proved to be the torn title-page of a paper novel, and, oddly enough, it was printed in Spanish.

CHAPTER V.

PATRIOTISM AND ART.

CARNEGIE was in a mood to which this trifle seemed decisive. "I've a feeling," he remarked aloud, "that this path will repay me!" And then, half laughing at himself and half eager, he placed the scrap of paper in an inner pocket. It was past eleven by his watch and he was hungry, so down he sat by the stream and ate heartily. The remoteness, the picturesqueness of the place, its deep shadows, the confusion of piled rocks down which the brook rushed—all these pleased his imagination, and led it gently forward over the path he had yet to explore.

He stowed away his rod and basket in the bushes, and, light of heart and heel, began to ascend. An hour passed and found him still climbing. The way led him along the edge of

the gorge, in whose depth the stream boiled, which he crossed and recrossed, steadily ascending. On either hand the shoulders of the hills rose into the sky, covered with superb, untouched forest. The view grew wilder and grander as he climbed, and often he was tempted to pause and exclaim, as he surmounted a rise and caught sight of the stream throwing its veil of waters from a cliff above his head. Thus far his walk lying in the gorge along the bed of the stream, he had been unable to catch any extended or determining outlook, but now the path left the brookside and struck directly upward. The birch and alder growth was left behind, the voice of the torrent died out to a distant murmur; now the trees grew sparse, and long reaches of granite took the place of mosses. The path still and ever led up, and Carnegie had just decided that if ten minutes brought no result he must perforce turn back, when it suddenly disappeared altogether, and he came out of a belt of scrub pine upon a mountain side overlooking the bay. He was

disappointed, for although the view was superb he had not come for a view. The slope dropped away below him into the shadow of the ravine. Across this ravine, with only its width between, rose a second much higher mountain, and behind it, others huddling up into the sky. At his feet was the large, irregular bay, and he could just see Shattogie Point, with an ultramarine band of sea beyond. He stood, surveying all this, upon a sort of pass without definite outlet, and the path he had been following led evidently nowhere but to this prospect. This was not at all what he had hoped, and he uttered a vigorous exclamation of impatience.

“I beg your pardon,” said a clear voice just at his ear, “but—are you looking for The Lodges?”

Carnegie spun round, doubting his senses. On a rock a few feet off sat a boy of fifteen or sixteen. He was a slender fellow, brown and hardy, with an odd, irregular, sensitive face, rather handsome and lit by a pair of extraordinarily brilliant eyes. His

clothing was rough, but it was not the dress of a native, and under one arm he carried a sketchbook. Though this apparition in such a place was startling, yet there was nothing out of the way in the appearance of this young artist.

“Don’t look so frightened!” he continued before Carnegie could speak. “I heard you swear, and thought perhaps you were bound for The Lodges and had lost the way.”

“That is just my case,” replied Carnegie, noticing that the boy spoke with a slight English accent. “I had lost my way.”

“I’ll take you there, if you like,” said the boy promptly, and, jumping from the rock, he began to walk briskly down the path, evidently expecting Carnegie to follow. He moved over the ground so easily and quickly that the other could not readily keep up with him, so they went some distance in single file, not speaking. Carnegie’s guide put his hands in his pockets and whistled like a bird. He was remarkably active and graceful in all his movements; full of life, too, and

in places skipped from rock to rock as if from sheer high spirits. But after a time he slackened pace and waited for Carnegie to come up.

"We aren't far," he remarked, shooting the stranger a glance.

"You are better at this sort of thing than I," said Carnegie, who was stiff from his long climb. "Do you live about here?"

"I am spending the summer at The Lodges," the boy explained. "It's a sort of camping club for artists—but of course you know."

Carnegie stopped short suddenly and swore.

"What's the matter?" asked his guide impatiently.

"Nothing—I twisted my ankle."

"You seem to swear for very little!" said the boy frankly. The rebuke was deserved, but Carnegie glanced with raised eyebrows at his young mentor. However, he was too much interested in what he had just heard to comment on his companion's freedom.

"Señor Aguiras is at The Lodges, is he not?" he inquired, with an appearance of idleness in the question.

At this the boy stopped in his turn, and gave a long whistle. "Hello!" said he. "Did you want to see Aguiras?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"Are you a friend of his?"

"Certainly!" replied Carnegie, and made as if to go on. But the boy stood still in the path, his hands buried in his pockets, a thoughtful and much older expression upon his very expressive face.

"I don't know," he said. "You see"—then with a frank look at Carnegie—"that alters matters. I happen to know that Aguiras doesn't want to be disturbed just at present. He doesn't want it known that he is here either. He told me that himself—we've sketched together and we're friends. He came here for rest. I really don't know if I ought to take you."

"I'll answer for that!" said Carnegie impatiently. But the boy did not move.

"Are you a newspaper reporter?" was his next question.

"Lord bless you, no!" Carnegie cried; "only a private individual. My name is Hugh Carnegie. Aguiras knows me. You'll find it's all right."

"Then there's another thing I hadn't thought of," pursued the boy, deliberately sitting down on a stone by the path. "We've tried to keep The Lodges a secret. If the other artists and students knew about it they'd all want to come. I have no right to take you in, unless—" He paused and a faint smile quivered on his face. "But I'm sure you're not an artist!" he ended.

"You are quite right," said Carnegie. "But what makes you sure?"

"Your clothes," said the boy, without a moment's hesitation. "That check!"

His tone spoke volumes.

"I assure you I only wish to speak to Aguiras," said Carnegie, half amused at this criticism and half annoyed by the delay, "on

private business. He knows me, and I am certain it will be all right."

"Well," said the boy doubtfully, "if you won't write up The Lodges I suppose there's no harm in taking you there. You will promise that?"

Carnegie assented eagerly, and the boy slowly rose. "As for Aguiras," said he, "it's his affair. How did you find out he was here—did he tell you?"

"He let me know," said Carnegie diplomatically. They were walking on again, side by side.

"And where are you staying, Mr. Carnegie?" asked the boy more affably.

"On what they call here Shattogie Point. Do you know it? We call the house by its old name—the Château Gui."

"Where the princess lives?" inquired the lad quickly.

"Exactly."

The boy gave an abrupt brusque little laugh at this, and remained silent.

"May I ask to whom I am indebted?"

Carnegie asked gravely, after waiting some time for him to speak.

“My name is Peter Brent,” was the answer, stiffly given; and the boy, as if to end the conversation, slipped ahead and began to lead down the path at the brisk pace which made talking impossible. By this time they had descended several hundred feet, and were once more within the shadow of the pine wood. The boy now took another path at right angles, which Carnegie had not noticed. After a quarter of a mile through the wood along the mountain side the guide paused. “There are The Lodges!” said he, as Carnegie came up, and pointed ahead. The mountain side broadened here into a plateau, commanding a beautiful view down the gorge. Beyond the limit of the pine wood was a stretch of grass, and here clustered half a dozen picturesque log huts, each with its balsam-filled lean-to and well-piled camp fire. The smoke rising in the air brought a pungent odour; the situation was charming; and on one side Carnegie

noted a rustic open-air dining-room, the table spread. It might have been the Adirondacks.

"What a delightful camp!" said he. "You live here?"

"There's our hut, my sister's and mine," replied Peter, indicating it. "It is jolly, so free and out of the way. Look, there's Aguiras now!"

He took off his cap and waved it, so attracting the attention of a tall figure.

"He seems to know you," Peter remarked, as Aguiras hastened toward them. Indeed, the cordiality of his voice and welcome was more than Carnegie had looked for.

"My friend! Who would have believed it!" he cried, showing all his teeth in a smile, and he wrung the American heartily by the hand. For his part, Carnegie was puzzled. He followed Aguiras into his hut without answering his torrent of words. Had he come thus far upon a wild-goose chase? He began to doubt.

The Spaniard—for though born in Cuba, he was Spanish still—was a man who might

have been considered handsome but for an expression of restless discontent which marred his features. His face was thin, eager, haggard, the lips tremulous, the eyes fiery and unsteady. An attempt to appear American in dress and manner had deprived his tall figure of dignity, and lent it a certain ungainliness. His whole appearance suggested the man "out of suits with fortune" pursuing chimeras, fighting circumstance. Carnegie pitied him, for the man's wrongs were personal and bitter; the island of his exile meant nothing to him, save as it furnished added rancour to his immediate quarrel with his Government. The humiliation of his family for four generations and the utter injustice toward them, had simply consumed the man like fire. He was an active member of the Cuban Junta, working for the cause fervidly, with more zeal than judgment; for he possessed an accentuation of dominant Latin qualities. Carnegie had his own opinion of the man, which he shared in common with several other Americans who had tried to

help Aguiras to help himself. A perfervid excitement without practical channels, and an exaggerated sense of his own dignity and delicacy, had been two of the qualities against which they had contended in vain. Aguiras, of course, was desperately poor, and eked out his living by doing occasional water-colour sketches and etchings, not without talent. Every acquaintance of his had become the owner of one or more of these works of art.

“So you found me out, my good Carnegie!” He laid his hand affectionately on the American’s shoulder. “You see, I had to rest. My head began to reel with all I had been doing!” He spread his arms wide. “And you came up with little Peter?” He transferred his affectionate hand to Peter’s shoulder and smiled on him. Peter stood stolid. Carnegie thought he had never seen a face better calculated to display emotion, yet more thoroughly in control, than this odd boy’s.

“Mr. Carnegie asked me to bring him,”

he remarked, moving away from under the Cuban's hand. Aguiras patted Carnegie, laughing.

"I can trust my friends," cried he enthusiastically, "not to hamper me in my important work. Peter, this"—he indicated Carnegie—"is the friend of years and patriot to the core! It is he that——"

"Pooh!" interrupted Carnegie uncomfortably. "Nonsense! I want to speak to you on a matter for a moment," he continued hurriedly, seeing that Aguiras had spread his wings for flight.

Aguiras sighed and smiled, and nodded an indulgent assent.

"If our young friend would be so kind as to leave us for a moment"—and Carnegie glanced at the boy authoritatively, perhaps the more so as he was conscious the lad's eye showed an interest. Peter flushed angrily, wheeled about, and left the hut stiffly, without a backward glance.

"Now you have vexed Peter!" complained Aguiras tenderly.

Carnegie gave a shrug. "I want to talk to you," he repeated, and looked about for a seat.

The furniture of the hut consisted of some boxes, rough shelves, a pile of cut wood in one corner, in the other a cot with an army blanket folded neatly. Sunshine came in through the open door, the air was spicy with odours of the forest. The faint blue hills lay under their eyes.

"You have not told me where you are staying," Aguiras began, offering a box to his guest and seating himself on another.

Carnegie replied quietly: "I am visiting my cousin, the Princess Sarrazine." He had come to the conclusion that the only way to treat the interview, and this romantic patriot, was to handle them straight from the shoulder. Aguiras was more than his match in any tortuous course, but then Carnegie had the Anglo-Saxon strength in direct frankness. However, he had had no reason thus far to think the man dishonest. At the mention of the princess a blanket of reserve

seemed to shut down on Aguiras's face. He turned his eyes meditatively toward the hills, and stroked his chin.

"Ah!" said he. The monosyllable was courteous but final, like the sound of a key turned in the lock.

"You did not expect to go away when I saw you last," continued Carnegie conversationally. "What brought you here?"

"Business," said Aguiras laconically.

"May I ask what business?" Carnegie leaned a little forward.

Aguiras raised his head and returned the look, with a gesture. "No, my friend," he replied, with superb dignity, "you may not ask."

A pause followed. Aguiras continued in a low voice, meditative, statuesque, as though he had suddenly draped himself in a Roman toga: "Where my work calls, I go. You remember? 'It is sweet and praiseworthy to die for the fatherland.' In this solitude, Carnegie, I have thought much on these things; they have taken new meaning for me." He

made a gesture which seemed to include and explain the scene of his meditations, then dropped the Roman for the Jacobin of 1793—fiery, dramatic. He drew himself up. “It is on the mountain slopes,” he apostrophized, “that the spirit of liberty is born. I always loved your English poets. Which one of them speaks of the ‘mountain nymph sweet Liberty?’ Here, during the last few days, I seem to have met her face to face—to have relearned my lesson from her. Why am I here? Sacrifice, toil, persecution for the spirit, the idea of patriotism.” He paused, with a consciousness of effect belonging peculiarly to the Latin.

Carnegie sat with his elbows on his knees, his eyes fixed upon the line of hills. When he spoke, his voice, by contrast, sounded drier, more matter-of-fact than was natural.

“Since you do not explain, I will come to the point,” said he. “I chanced to oversee your midnight visit to my cousin’s house.” His voice dropped a note. “I should like

to have your explanation of this very curious proceeding."

"Ah!" repeated Aguiras, playing with his moustache. He had coloured faintly, but gave no other evidence of being startled. "The question is"—he broke the pause—"can I trust you?"

Carnegie smiled. "I am waiting for your explanation," said he, and watched Aguiras, who, after a moment of gravity and reflection, came to an apparent decision, and turned toward him with that manner of generous dignity so attractive in him. His whole attitude made Carnegie appear bullying and suspicious.

"There is nothing whatever in this affair to alarm you, my friend," said he. "I had not meant to speak of it, but you deserve my confidence. A dear friend of mine is at present staying under the same roof with you."

"Jacoby?"

"Yes; an ardent friend to Cuba Libre—and to me."

All this information was magnanimously advanced to Carnegie, who merely replied, "Well?"

"M. Jacoby is very intimate," continued Aguiras, with no abatement of frankness, "with your hostess, Madame la Princesse de Sarrazine. He knows that she is immensely wealthy, without children or near relatives. What could be more natural than that Jacoby, himself a patriot, should try to interest her, pecuniarily, in the cause?"

"Jacoby trying to interest the princess in the cause!" Carnegie repeated incredulously. "I beg your pardon, but this explanation does not adequately account for your meeting him stealthily at night."

"You forget I have delicacy!" cried Aguiras with fire. "I do not ask money from a lady—I am Spanish. It is well for Jacoby, who is a French Jew; but for me—" His shoulders expressively finished the sentence.

"Your meeting in secret was from motives of delicacy? May I ask, then, why it did not take place somewhere else?"

“Jacoby, as a guest, could not choose his hours,” replied Aguiras instantly, with admirable patience.

Carnegie kept silence a moment. In any other case he would have dismissed the above story with contempt; but in the case of Aguiras his knowledge of the man led him to believe that it might be just the sort of thing Aguiras might do. The disproportion, the impracticability of the idea, the love of mystery and passion for intrigue about trifles displayed in the story, were all familiar characteristics which, in his opinion, Aguiras was more likely to be guided by than to invent. The inadequacy of motive in the explanation meant little; Aguiras was very likely to be led by just such inadequate or imaginary motives.

“You say Jacoby is a friend of yours?” he asked at length.

Aguiras nodded, and some knowledge of his enthusiasms caused Carnegie to inquire further.

“How long have you known him?”

"Since April."

"Do you mind telling me when and where?"

"He had arrived from Paris," said the other carelessly, "and appeared at our meetings. I saw at once he was the friend of liberty!"

Very little further inquiry served to show Carnegie that Aguiras really knew next to nothing of "the friend of liberty." As a result, vague thoughts and suspicions concerning Jacoby began to make him the prominent figure in Carnegie's mind, and the importance of Aguiras in the matter dwindled. Not that he was by any means satisfied with the explanation, although the frank compliance in offering it had shaken his suspicions. The talk drifted off into minor topics, giving Aguiras some opportunities for rhetoric; and then Carnegie broke it off and rose to go. He looked Aguiras significantly in the eye.

"I shall want to see you again," said he. "And—may I add a word of warning? I

am apt to be hasty with my pistol when I am sleepy and the night is dark."

Aguiras became stiff and stately. "Of course I should not venture to intrude in a house where *you* were staying," he said, as if offended; "nor have I deserved the rebuke at your hands, Carnegie!"

"All right; when am I to see you?"

"I will send Peter," said Aguiras. "Do me the favour to keep my visit here a secret. You see, I am *resting*."

"I understand." Carnegie's smile was momentary. The two shook hands with a fair amount of cordiality, and then the American came out of the hut. To his surprise, the boy Peter Brent stood waiting for him.

"I'll show you the way down," he said briefly, and without further words preceded Carnegie in the path as before. When they were out of sight of The Lodges the boy paused to let Carnegie come up abreast of him, and showed an inclination to talk.

"Isn't he wonderful?" he began, with a

backward toss of his brown head to indicate that he meant Aguiras.

“What do you mean?” said Carnegie, amused.

“I said ‘wonderful.’ So brave—and gentle! So self-sacrificing, and such a patriot! When one thinks what he has undergone—what he has done for the cause!” The lad’s face kindled, showing the influence at work so plainly that Carnegie was aroused. He already felt an interest in this unusually vivid personality.

“Don’t you think so?” Peter repeated.

“Certainly his family has been very badly treated,” Carnegie answered.

“Then you *don’t* think *he* has done much for his country?” cried the boy, exasperated.

Carnegie looked at him and smiled. “You are very fiery, my young friend. I’m afraid my opinions will seem colourless to you after his eloquence.”

“I suppose you’re *practical*,” said the boy, with infinite scorn. “Well?” he added, as Carnegie kept silence.

“Do you still wish to hear my opinion after that verdict?” Carnegie said quietly. “If you do, then I will say that Aguiras is too visionary to accomplish much. He talks well and—a great deal. Has he told you ‘the story of his life?’” He had to repeat this question.

“He has told me of his work and his wrongs,” Peter said finally, looking away.

“Well,” said Carnegie good-naturedly, “don’t let him borrow your money for the cause if you happen to have any to lend. His intentions are good, but he knows nothing of the management of money.”

The boy’s face flamed at this. “Too bad of Aguiras!” thought Carnegie indignantly.

“You mustn’t mind what I said, nor misinterpret it,” he went on aloud; “I’ve known him, perhaps, longer than you have. I like him, too. But it’s like throwing it away to give him money for the cause; one can see that to look at him.”

“I think you’re—hard,” said the boy stubbornly, but the red had faded from his

brown cheek. "I suppose I see what you mean," he added reluctantly. "Señor Aguiras does live in the clouds a little. That is what makes him such a relief—after you Americans!"

"Hello! Aren't you one?" cried Carnegie.

"No, I'm not," said the boy shortly, and strode on faster.

Carnegie asked him one or two questions about himself.

"Do you and your sister live alone up there? You seem pretty young for that."

The boy nodded.

"You are orphans, then?"

"My mother died when I was a baby."

"Poor children! How much older is your sister?"

"Two years older." Some thought made the boy flush, and he added hurriedly, "We get along very well."

Carnegie turned upon him a look of sympathetic kindness, which wonderfully lighted up his face. "I wish you would adopt me

as a big brother," he said, half laughing; "I'm alone in the world, too. It would give me the privilege of scolding you for throwing away your money on a dreamer like Juan Aguiras."

"Don't talk of it!" the lad cried, as if involuntarily. "You mean kindly, but—you don't understand!" His dark eyes, which he raised to his companion, bore in their depths an embarrassment and trouble which led Carnegie to change the subject. But the ice between them had nevertheless been thoroughly broken, and Peter showed no aversion to continuing the conversation when it turned to books and pictures. Carnegie found him, for his years, extremely intelligent and well-read. He had a dash of imperiousness and youthful cynicism, which contrasted oddly with his high spirit and naïveté. It was as if life had forced certain developments in him out of proportion to the rest. They talked and laughed readily together down the mountain side. Carnegie would have liked to have asked Peter's nationality,

as he spoke familiarly of Paris; yet his vivacity was not French vivacity. However, he forebore, wishing to set the boy at ease, and they kept on art and kindred topics till the log bridge came in sight below, spanning the two streams.

“Good-bye, and thank you!” Carnegie said, shaking hands. “Won’t you come and see me? It’s not far to the Château Gui.”

“I don’t know,” said the boy rather brusquely, and hastily turned to mount the path again. Some distance up he paused and waved his cap in farewell to Carnegie, who waved his in return, for their voices could not have been heard above the noise of the torrent.

It was four o’clock when Carnegie finally got back to his tethered rowboat. He had found the fishing tackle in the bushes, and was ashamed of his empty basket. The row homeward seemed long, and he was fairly weary by the time he landed and made his way across the lawn to the house. He meant to seek his room to rest and dress, but this

was not destined to happen. As he crossed the hall the door of the drawing-room opened, and the princess beckoned him in excitedly. To his concern, there were traces of tears on her cheeks. She shut the door carefully after him, and then stood leaning up against it.

“Oh, Hugh!” she whispered, putting out a hand to him, “the pearl is gone! What shall I do?”

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

"THE pearl is gone!" repeated Carnegie mechanically.

"Yes, gone! Disappeared! Yet it hasn't been stolen—it *hasn't!*" and she wrung her hands at him. Carnegie set his fishing tackle and basket on the floor, drew up a chair, and sat down somewhat stiffly thereon. He laid his head back and folded his hands; his face was contemplative.

"Where's Jacoby?" was his first question.

"Upstairs, packing. He has received a telegram and must go by the mail boat this evening."

"This evening? Isn't that rather sudden?"

"He has been expecting some such summons. I'm glad, for I don't want him to

know, Hugh!" said the princess, with eagerness.

"It's rather sudden!" was all Carnegie replied, and she made an impatient movement.

"What does it matter? Don't you understand that the pearl—my pearl—has *gone*?"

"No, it hasn't!" He spoke firmly, sitting upright.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean it has not gone yet. Claudia, don't you see? It will go this evening, with Jacoby! This hurried departure—pooh! It's as plain as A B C that he has stolen it, of course."

He was so certain he was right, that all his speech implied and comprehended was not fully brought home to him. But, to his astonishment, the princess was neither horrified nor distressed; she laughed.

"Oh, no, Hugh!" said she. "You are quite mistaken, I am certain!" Her tone was light and assured.

"But how do you know?" cried Carnegie, indignant at this denial.

"Because I do know; that's all!"

"You have been with Jacoby every instant of the time?"

"It's not that—only that it's impossible. I assure you that is not the explanation; we must look for another."

"But, Claudia, nothing is impossible to a man who needs money!"

She continued to repeat that it was impossible, in her inflexible way, with impatience, as if anxious to pass on to other speculations.

"Let me go up and see him!" Carnegie cut her short by rising. "I'm not satisfied, though you seem to be. I'll take all the responsibility." He made a step toward the door, but she sprang up and caught him by the arm.

"No, no, no, Hugh! You don't understand!" The colour left her cheeks and lips. "I do not want M. Jacoby to know the pearl is lost—particularly!"

“But why on earth——”

“I couldn’t stand the scene—it would be horrible! No, not that! You must promise me, Hugh. He must not know, under any circumstances!” She spoke incoherently; her eyes, looking into his, were dark with a sort of terror, and the soft, weak hands clung to him tenaciously. Carnegie sat down, beginning to undergo a curious nightmare sensation of perplexity.

“Besides, you have not heard how it happened!” she continued, and he replied:

“That is true; tell me,” in his ordinary quiet voice. All during her story she kept darting little terrified glances at him, as if he might run away before she could prevent.

“You saw that I wore my pearl last night,” she began. “When I went to bed I locked it up as usual. I keep my pearls (I left my other jewels in Paris) in an inland cabinet which stands in my bedroom. The cash box in which I kept them in the Rue Cambon—you remember?—was so badly bent in the journey that it could not be

used. So since I landed I've been keeping the pierced pearl in one of those little pink cardboard boxes, you know, from Maillard's—that have 'Chocolat Instantané' on the lid. You've seen them? They pull out, and are divided into two compartments, about so big"—she measured with her finger. "I used to keep the pearl in one part, wrapped in cotton wool. I thought it a particularly good idea—no one would ever suspect what was inside! Jewel cases are always so tempting! Well—" She paused and glanced at Carnegie, who was trying to hear with patience this tale of a pearl in a bon-bon box.

"I know it was there this morning early, for I opened the cabinet to get out a certain pair of sleeve links. The cabinet is full of small boxes, and I had to pull all these out to get what I wanted. I was in a hurry, so I just gathered up as many boxes as my two hands could hold, and set them on a table nearby while I rummaged. When I found the links, I tumbled all the boxes

back into the cabinet pellmell, and turned the key on them. I saw the pink box when I first opened the door, and I *know* it was not among those I took out. They were full of trash; my few handsome pieces were untouched at the back of the cabinet. Now, Hugh, nobody knows, not even Varinka, that I kept the pearl in that little pink box.

“I locked the door—I heard it click, so you needn’t look scornful—leaving several unimportant boxes, some empty, some full, on the table. And when, after breakfast, I unlocked the cabinet again to put these away, I could not find the pink box anywhere.”

Carnegie’s feelings during this narrative are better imagined than described. Politeness bade him suppress them and lend her his aid; so he made no comment. Rising, he asked to be shown the cabinet, and she took him upstairs at once. He found everything as she had described it. The cabinet was a tall, narrow affair, handsomely inlaid, and consisting of a central compartment on four slender, carved legs. It was well made,

and reinforced with bands of pierced metal. Carnegie encountered no difficulty in locking and unlocking it, which he did several times. Inside it was lined with satinwood, and piled with small jewellery boxes. Needless to say, the pearl was in none of these. Carnegie made the princess search the room, every box and drawer, lest she should have absent-mindedly put it elsewhere; but although she obeyed him he could not shake her from the belief that she had seen it when she first opened the cabinet. The search over, they passed together into the adjoining boudoir.

Carnegie began to pace the room, his hands behind his back, while the princess, her face quite pale, sank into a chair.

“Now let me ask you a few questions.” His voice was authoritative, and she kept throwing him scared side glances. “You had no difficulty in opening the cabinet the second time?” he asked her first.

“None whatever; it opened as usual.”

“Where was the key meanwhile?”

"On the ring in my key box."

"Was the key box locked?"

"I don't know; I think so—yes, I'm sure it was! Here is the key of it on my chate-laine."

"You could not swear it was locked?"

She hesitated, and then replied firmly:
"No; I am certain, but I could not swear."

"How long were you gone?"

"An hour and a half at least."

"Where was Varinka during your absence? In this boudoir?"

"No; at her breakfast. It could not have been Varinka; she did not know where I kept it."

"She might have known, nevertheless. Where was Miss Vesey at the time?"

"Oh, poor Miss Vesey! She was in bed with a headache."

"Alone?"

"No. The chambermaid was with her all the morning."

"This was about ten o'clock?"

"I left the room about ten."

"Was Jacoby downstairs when you appeared?"

"He came down about half an hour later."

"Ah! about half an hour. Now, do you chance to remember if the window was open?"

The princess started. "I think it was!" said she, in a mortified voice. "That is, the one over the piazza may have been."

"And you are certain you did not take out the box with the pearl?"

"Absolutely certain. I slipped several from under it, leaving it inside the cabinet."

"Was the door of your room unlocked?"

"Only one was, the bathroom door, and that was closed. The others were locked. The rooms were shut up."

"The window was open!" Carnegie's inflection was ironical. "Well, well, Claudia, I must say you could not have made it much easier for a thief. It becomes a question of choice between methods of burglary, on my word!"

She bit her lip, but made no reply.

“I still think,” said Carnegie, facing her in his walk, “that the affair points to Jacoby. Of course, it could be any one of the servants from Varinka to Bolislas, but they are hardly in a position on this peninsula to dispose of it readily, although the whole job was disgracefully easy. Your absence from the room gave the thief ample time to pick and choose, but I am inclined to believe that a servant would ignorantly take other things as well. But our friend Jacoby would know that the pearl was enough. I am also tempted to believe, from the fact the cabinet shows no sign of disturbance, that you are mistaken—that you left the box outside yourself. In that case our friend profited by your carelessness. For all you know he may have been on the lookout for it.”

“I am absolutely convinced that you are wrong”—Claudia rose with dignity—“and I forbid you to mention the loss of it to him.” Her eyes were bright and restless, and she made a gesture of helplessness and finality which suddenly brought into his mind the

scene he had witnessed, in this very room, two nights back. It was on the tip of his tongue to refer to it, and Jacoby's further proceeding on that same night.

"I wish to tell you something further—" he began.

"I refuse! I will not hear anything!" she broke out, moving away.

"Claudia," said Carnegie gravely, "if you are attempting to shield this man from some motive, you are wrong; moreover, you will fail."

"I am *not*. And I tell you, Hugh, it is because I *know*." It was impossible to ignore the serious conviction of her voice.

Carnegie gave himself an angry shake. "Well, the loss is yours," said he, taking refuge in irony; "and as it is so trifling why bother? I'll go and dress."

She bit her handkerchief savagely into strips. "How can you, Hugh?" she cried, in a smothered voice. "Don't you see I'm half mad?" Sobs rose piteously in her throat.

“What do you want me to do, Claudia?” he asked more kindly, but not otherwise affected. “I will do anything you wish. A telegram can be sent to Boston for a detective to search the servants’ things.” She shook her head vehemently at this suggestion.

“Then what do you suggest?” He tried to speak mildly.

Claudia dried her eyes and sat up, facing him. Her doll-like face was haggard, and moved him to pity. She interlaced her fingers nervously while she spoke.

“You can do anything, Hugh; anything you like—*anything*, I say, except let it be known the pearl is lost! Bad as this is, that would be worse! I dare say you don’t understand how I feel——”

“No, I don’t,” he interjected frankly.

“But I can’t let the servants know I suspect them till there is further proof. I can’t have a hue and cry—you don’t dream. It isn’t that I can afford the loss, as I paid——” She strove for coherence and ended more

quietly. "You are so clever! Surely there's a way to get it quietly without any one knowing?"

"Claudia, you must see that the only way to recover such a thing is to give the loss publicity. In such a place as this—" he was protesting, but she cut him short obstinately:

"I can't help that!"

"You handicap me fearfully," he went on; "and, frankly, I tell you, that if you persist in letting Jacoby go your chance goes too."

"I don't care! It was not he!" she cried hysterically, and Carnegie saw that remonstrance was useless.

"Well, I'll go think it over," he said resignedly, and so got out of the room.

He wondered if the loss had really unhinged her. The utter unreasonableness of her conduct provoked him beyond words. His own thought on the matter was definite. Aguiras, perhaps, was moving with Jacoby in the affair; but Jacoby he felt certain had been the thief. And Claudia's command for-

bade him to make use of his own evidence! He uttered a malediction on her carelessness. The open window, the gem worth thousands, in a pink cardboard chocolate box! Could folly do more, he thought, incredulous with scorn.

As for helping her, he saw no way. There was still a chance, to be sure, that a servant had stolen it, and if so a day or two must pass before it was conveyed safely from the house. He might institute a sort of watch, and also examine the mail bag, in neither of which proceedings he felt the slightest confidence.

Meanwhile, he took occasion to look carefully after his own belongings. He would not run any risks with the drawings and reports which he was merely waiting to classify before sending to Washington. Some of the plans were most valuable and important. He had placed them heretofore in a locked drawer; he now removed them to the bottom of his trunk. He came across his revolver in its case and loaded it. Further

proof might be forthcoming of the complicity of Aguiras; in any case the Château Gui was lonely. If Claudia had not worn the pearl last night, how simple the matter would have been, and how much more significant the midnight meeting of the two men! As things were, it was still significant enough for Carnegie to make up his mind that he must see Aguiras again shortly. "No romance this time!" he thought, with a grim smile. Until then, hampered by Claudia's command, he could only watch and wait.

At dinner M. Jacoby was profuse in regrets. Closely as Carnegie watched the man, he could see no trace of nervousness or uneasiness. Jacoby ate an excellent dinner and chatted agreeably with his hostess, who had largely recovered her self-command.

"Ah, it is hard to leave the Château Gui!" he said several times.

"Where are you bound next?" Carnegie asked him, as they stood together on the piazza waiting for Jacoby's bags to be brought down.

"My business takes me to Halifax. You remain here—yes?"

"For a time, at least," answered Carnegie; mentally ejaculating, "Canada, of course! Claudia is a fool!"

"Until your work is finished," said Jacoby sympathetically; "and it is a great work you Americans are doing. I await your triumph at Santiago!"

"It is coming, I think," said Carnegie, and as Bolislas appeared with the bags the American shook hands with "the friend of liberty."

"We shall meet again before long. Au revoir!" said M. Jacoby, and halfway down the path turned and waved his cap to them.

"There goes your pearl," Carnegie could not forbear to say to Claudia.

"Oh, hush!" cried she nervously; "some one might hear!"

For some time they stood watching the white sail move across the bay, shining in the afterglow, and vanish round the point. His evident fatigue gave Carnegie an excuse

to retire early, and the princess did not seem to object.

Carnegie had not forgotten to get hold of the mail bag and examine its contents while Jacoby was preparing to depart. Needless to say, it contained nothing suspicious; a like examination took place each night for a week without producing the slightest result.

CHAPTER VII.

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

THE departure of Jacoby had certain advantages, from Carnegie's point of view. Besides the *tête-à-tête* with his hostess, which was usually agreeable enough, it gave him the chance and excuse to work. He withdrew for this purpose early each evening, always to find his table drawn out, the lamp set forth, the inkstand filled. Indeed, the attention that was paid to his wants in the Château Gui was flattery in itself, giving him the guest's privileges with the liberties of a host.

In this manner the first week of July, diversified by so many national events, passed quietly for Carnegie. The princess and he went out together in the *Señorita*, talked together, and played chess on foggy evenings.

She was very companionable and affectionate to him these days, and needless to say they did not revert often to the subject of the stolen pearl. Carnegie was convinced that its loss was Claudia's own fault, and he therefore kept silence on the subject. It was often overshadowed in his mind by the importance of military and naval operations as set forth in the vivid record of the newspapers. He would read columns of war news aloud to Claudia, exulting in the dash, the heroism of various figures, and she would listen courteously, indulgently.

He was much more interested in these readings than in his daily investigation of the mail bag, which brought him no clew. The occasional servant's letter, which he hated to open and read, was of the most harmless and illiterate description. The whole business struck him as farcical and filled him with impatience. Nevertheless, he noted that Claudia wrote almost daily to Jacoby, and this fact tended to confirm his opinion that there was something of a sentimental nature be-

tween them. Once he went so far as to hint of this to her.

“Jacoby and I? You must be crazy, Hugh!” Her stare of blank amazement was followed by a withdrawing, haughty glance. “Really, the unsuitability of such an idea——”

“Don’t annihilate me!” Carnegie said cheerfully. “After all, you ask him to your house, and you write to him——”

“That is true, but it does not alter the fact that in any position I should never even consider such an absurd——” She finished her sentence, which had been uttered in her most monotonously icy tones, with an expressive gesture.

“I don’t see it,” said he, and could not forbear to add: “after all, you have trusted him with your most valuable possession, so why——”

“Nothing of the kind! That was wholly a mistake of yours!” said she swiftly, and changed the subject to himself.

Carnegie was not so dull as to fail seeing

the warmth and sympathy she brought to bear upon this. She often talked of his work in terms which made him regretful of his own reserve and withdrawal, and yet never the more inclined to break through them. He was not in the very least in love with Claudia Sarrazine, nor had he sufficient respect for her character to give her the unrestrained confidence she demanded. Her recurring complaint, "You are so cold, Hugh; you might tell me more!" had justice in it, and often its significance made him uncomfortable. At times he was tempted to cut short his visit, but again was checked by his sense of kinship and chivalry, the sight of her dependence on him, and the remembrance of the business of the pearl.

Every now and then he refreshed himself by a solitary walk or row, during which he thought much. Hoping that Claudia would come to her senses and give him freedom to deal with the theft as he wished, Carnegie had delayed to see Aguiras until the interview should be unhampered by Claudia's

restrictions. But thus far she had shown no such intention, and he was beginning to grow restless under the forced inaction.

One afternoon his oars brought him within the reach of voices, and he came upon Peter Brent and his sister sketching in a nook by the shore. At sight of them Carnegie, pleased, beached the boat and came up to the pair. The girl, a pretty, fair-haired creature, glanced up in surprise as he addressed Peter by name.

"How are you?" said the boy, extending his slim, brown hand. "Dora, this is Mr. Carnegie."

Dora Brent blushed a little at the introduction. She looked no older than her brother, and, like him, was slender and tall, though her face and expression were markedly different. Although very pretty, blonde, and soft-looking, she had none of Peter's intelligence or fire. She was more finished in manner, demure, and sweet; she let Peter do most of the talking. The difference between their sketches was much the same as that

between their personalities, or so it struck Carnegie's eye. The girl's work was delicate, highly finished, characterless; the boy's bold, vigorous, individual, with a firmness of handling and colour which took the fancy. An open sketchbook showed other drawings—all talented, and one or two displaying great spirit.

"Have you studied long?" Carnegie asked the young artist respectfully.

"Some years," replied Peter, busy at work. He wore a tam-o'-shanter on his rough, brown hair; and as he sat, straight-backed and slim, with one knee cocked over the other, he was a picturesque figure.

"How are you enjoying your visit?" he asked Carnegie, nodding in the direction of the Château Gui.

"Very much," Carnegie replied, from the rock where he had seated himself.

"We saw the princess the other day," said Dora, "and thought her beautiful."

"I didn't," Peter hastened to say, with a curl of the lip.

"Peter is a woman hater!"

"He has begun early!" remarked Carnegie, smiling.

"I hate that sort of doll-faced woman," Peter vouchsafed, dabbing fiercely at his forehead; "with a pulled-in waist, and mauve-coloured stockings from the Palais Royal!"

"Peter!" Dora shot her brother a shocked glance, and Carnegie raised his eyebrows. There was something acrid and unboylike in the speech which he did not like to hear, and he maintained a significant silence.

"You are horrified, too?" asked Peter, who had evidently expected him to speak. "You think my criticism harsh?"

"Well, you see," said Carnegie quietly, "you were speaking of my hostess."

"Ah, *vrai!*" said the boy, flushing; then he added frankly: "You are right. It was in bad taste—between gentlemen."

"Peter, you are too bad!" cried Dora, but Carnegie failed to see anything blame-worthy in the remark.

"Aren't you ever coming to see me?" he asked the boy; but Peter shook his head.

"Not unless Señor Aguiras sends me with a message. We're savages—Dora and I—we don't pay calls."

"By the way, where is Aguiras?"

"Still at The Lodges," Dora replied. A sort of perplexity had come into Peter's mobile face at mention of the name. After a moment or two he laid down his palette and turned to Carnegie. "There's an awfully good bit just beyond here," said he, jumping up; "wouldn't you like to see it?"

Carnegie assented gladly, and the two set off together, leaving Dora still at work. Peter was rather silent until they were out of sight. He piloted Carnegie through the underbrush to a little eminence, where there was a natural lookout. The view was charming, and Carnegie sat for a time looking at it. Then he turned to his companion, and saw that the lad's eyes were fixed upon his face, studying it.

"Going to paint me?" he asked, smiling.

"I want to ask you something," Peter said, shifting his position and speaking earnestly. "You remember what you told me the other day about Aguiras?"

"Very well." Carnegie became serious and attentive. "It hasn't troubled you, I hope?"

"I was angry," Peter allowed, "but I've heard since all you have done for him—and others——"

"I hope you've no exaggerated idea of the very trifling——"

"Let me speak, please! I've heard enough to show me that you have been his friend—that you know him. And I wanted to ask your advice." He had been looking seaward a little dreamily during these words, as though listening to an undercurrent of his own thoughts, but now he turned his eyes to Carnegie's with perfect, simple directness. His voice was gentler, older.

"Dora and I can't afford to help him any more—if there is any mistake. We're poor, you see. But I like him—he seems a

fine man to me. You believe he is honourable, don't you, and worthy of trust? Being visionary and unpractical doesn't matter to me so long as *that* is all right!" There was a wistfulness in the voice that was very young. Carnegie did not immediately answer.

"Personally I hate," he said at length slowly, "by any word of mine, to destroy your faith in any one or your enthusiasm for any good cause; but in this case— Look here, Peter, you are right in not wishing to keep this faith and enthusiasm unless they are well founded. That is one of the main differences between the great man and the visionary, as I see it. I have known Aguiras for a long time, though that makes it no easier to answer your question."

"He told me something that made me doubt," said the boy, "and I hated myself for the doubt."

"Of course you did!" Carnegie's sympathetic tone brought a new flash of confidence into the boy's face. "But, Peter, the truth

is that Aguiras's reputation in regard to money matters is not of the best. There is an unpracticableness which is dishonourable; for we can not be careless of other people's money. Aguiras talks a great deal about honour and delicacy, but he has nevertheless estranged many staunch friends by his lack of comprehension in regard to business obligations. I believe him to be a patriot, but do you know the saying that 'patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel'?"

"It is a shallow saying!" cried Peter, with spirit.

"Perhaps; but it is kept true by just such men as Aguiras. This patriotism talk is his refuge and strength. He honestly believes in it, it absorbs him, and causes others to overlook and condone his weaknesses. Do I make myself clear, I wonder? To say he is honest or dishonest is to draw a hard-and-fast line which would be inaccurate. Isn't it better to say that he is an excitable, ill-educated Spaniard, with no business head, and with but one idea in life?"

Peter had listened thoughtfully. "I see," he said.

"Just at this moment," continued Carnegie, "I have a particular reason to make me doubt Aguiras. I can't tell you," he added, as Peter looked up startled.

"Then, for me, Mr. Carnegie——"

"For you—for any young fellow starting life—I think him an unsafe companion. Not that he is bad, but his influence would not tend in a good direction. You see, I'm plain with you——"

"Oh, that's right," said the boy, nodding.

"And I am no enemy of his——"

"I know that!"

"But I am your friend as well, and you seem to be singularly alone for one so young. Don't let his talk carry you to the clouds. The work is so different from his fiery fancies! If only he had robust virtue or firm principles, instead of fantastic ideas! But there, I've said enough to let you see the truth."

The boy gave a quick nod of comprehen-

sion for reply, and both were silent. The talk had given birth to an intimacy which made the pause possible, without any constraint arising therefrom.

"How old are you?" Carnegie asked.

"Sixteen," Peter mumbled, looking down.

"I was alone at sixteen too. Is there anything else?"

"I am thinking it over," said Peter slowly. "I am placed this way: I might help, really help, Señor Aguiras (who has been very kind to me, remember), and his cause too, only it would be at the expense of some one else. I can not make up my mind which it is right to do! If I could trust him wholly that would determine me, for then the greater good would be done; but as it is—" He broke off, biting his under lip.

"It is always hard to decide which does the greater good," said Carnegie gently, "and at times impossible. Isn't it better to do the thing we feel to be simply honest? I would think a long time before I aided Aguiras or his plans at the expense of any

other, even though they seem so much more important. It all comes down to the mere justice of it. I'm sure you will do what is right."

"Then you wouldn't help him unless you were *sure*?" Peter persisted.

"Until absolute knowledge of both sides made me sure. And then, knowing Aguiras, I would still not be sure. Do you see? Shall we go back to your sister?"

They strolled back, and Carnegie kept his hand on the boy's shoulder. The conversation had pleased the elder man, and he said so.

"I am glad you felt able to talk to me, my boy."

"You're kind," said Peter, without looking up. He added, with a sudden vehemence of voice and manner: "And when so few have been kind—and one needs it—it means—a great deal!" The intensity of this speech, imparting so much to the words, caused Carnegie to look down on the lad with that impulse of kindness which so often guided him

in life. There was no chance for further discussion, as by this time they had reached Dora's side, and Carnegie found that he must return home. He bade them both good-bye and suggested coming the next day to see the sketches finished. As he pulled away he heard Dora say, "Oh, Peter! Peter!" reproachfully.

"She evidently keeps the boy in order," was his thought; "yet I wager he has ten times the character." In which supposition he was entirely correct.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LETTER IS POSTED.

HE saw Peter the succeeding day, and on each day following during a week of delicious weather. The southwest winds had given place to northwest for a time, which sent days wonderfully blue and nights when the aurora borealis melted and shifted over the mountain tops. After the perceptible strain and uneasiness of Claudia's society Carnegie felt Peter's company as a relief. The boy was wild and shy, and no inducement could bring him nearer the Château Gui than the other side of the isthmus. Here he would sit and sketch, or lie idly buried in bay bushes and sweet fern, until Carnegie appeared. Once or twice Dora accompanied him, but not oftener. Although more sophisticated, she was shy in her way also, and moreover

it was a fair walk from The Lodges to the shore. Later on, Carnegie came to look back upon this quiet interlude as something vague and dreamlike, in which nothing was very clear save the figures of Peter and the princess, while day followed day of lovely sea and sky and bracing wind.

Undoubtedly his tête-à-tête with Claudia had lately grown more personal in character, as she had grown more intimate and clinging. The hours spent in the open air with the boy became a pleasure. They were such a pair of babies to be doing for themselves, and yet so independent and self-reliant in it all, he never knew whether more to pity or admire. He was constantly amused by Peter's droll frankness, his vehement likes and dislikes, his young, exultant freedom, his colour and vitality. They rarely mentioned Aguiras; Peter was more anxious to talk about Carnegie and himself, and he grew expansive to his new friend. Occasionally he showed much older influences at work, traces of bitterness and hardship, even young as

he was, of disillusion. This Carnegie set down to the forcing circumstances of his life—a life likely to develop with undue rapidity this pair of orphans, who, with a very little money, lived and worked in a New York apartment. Very few questions served to show how strenuous and hard-working a life it was.

“Dora’s housekeeper, of course,” exclaimed Peter, “but she doesn’t do anything but get breakfast. There’s a very good little French place around the corner where we get our dinner table d’hôte for forty cents. It’s quiet, too—lots of the students go there.”

“But your luncheon?” asked Carnegie, unwontedly interested in these details.

“Oh, we can get that at the League or near by. Sometimes we take it with us; but I like something hot myself. Did you ever try a can of soup heated over a gas jet? It’s very good.”

Carnegie had tried that refreshment in his college days, and knew it was not to be despised. His manner during these revela-

tions was so perfectly sympathetic and matter-of-course that it never once suggested the possibility that for him the day of such expedients had gone by.

“I go home on most days at five, though sometimes later. If I’m the first, I make the tea, and set out the bread and butter and jam. Perhaps it may be dark and cold by the time Dora comes in; she often brings one of the girls in with her. And we sit and talk and have our tea together. It is very cosy.”

“And in the evenings, Peter?”

“Oh, there are always drawings for Concours, and I’ve been very successful. Sometimes I read.”

“You never go around with the other fellows?” Carnegie asked, and was relieved to hear him answer, “Haven’t the time.”

“And there is no change from this programme?” Carnegie asked, after a pause.

Peter shook his head. “Once in a while I go around to Mr. Glaenzer’s,” said he. “I’ve made one or two compositions he has

used for stained glass. He says I have ideas. If I'd the time I could make some money in designs for metal work and fabrics; I know I could," he added thoughtfully, his chin on his hand.

"You are too young, I think, to give up all education except art," Carnegie told him. "I know it would do your work good in the end if you could go through college." Peter laughed and dissented, but Carnegie fancied the dissent was not quite genuine.

"Some notion about taking care of Dora, I dare say," was his thought. "Was there ever such a youthful Don Quixote! I wonder——"

"What, Mr. Carnegie?" asked the boy, for Carnegie had involuntarily spoken the last two words aloud.

"I was wondering how proud you were."

Peter gave his head a toss. "Like the rest of my people," said he. "Will you row over there—where it's shady?" Carnegie took the oars obediently, and cast a whim-

sical look on the young figure stretched idly in the stern.

"It strikes me I'm doing all the work!" he suggested.

"That's all right!" Peter replied, without budging. "I'm an artist, and you're just an American!"

"You insufferable young puppy!" cried Carnegie, half in jest, half in earnest; and the boy laughed outright. But in another moment he was over-serious, and insisted with heat on taking the oars.

"I ought to be *thankful* to row you about," he said. He was a strange little fellow.

Meanwhile Carnegie's work was nearly completed; his collection of plans and reports was fully classified and annotated. Little remained but some indexing and copying before the bundle was ready to be sent to Washington. He looked carefully each day for evidence of prying or disturbance among his belongings, but found none. The mystery of the pierced pearl was now more than a

week old, and, owing to the princess's injunction, no definite steps had been taken toward its recovery. Carnegie had kept watch on the mail bag, a futile business which enraged him; and he was inclined to think that the princess herself was doing detective duty.

One evening, while locking his papers back into the trunk, his quick ear detected a rustle outside his door, and he opened it suddenly, to find the princess standing against it. Her eyes were dilated, and she held up a warning finger. A moment or two passed and nothing happened; he ventured to ask what she was doing.

"I thought the housemaid had something under her apron as if she wanted to hide it," she explained hurriedly. "Thanks, Hugh! Go back to your work!"

Carnegie's interest in Peter, for that individual absorbed his mind quite unusually, turned his mind away a good deal from the princess and her affairs. After all, if she could afford to let thousands go in this fashion it was her own affair, and she could not ex-

pect from him much interest or sympathy. Nothing exasperates a sensible man so much as such a piece of unreasonableness, and Claudia had lost a large part of her empire over Carnegie in consequence. It was as if that lack of understanding which used to be dominant between them had suddenly become active and tangible. When a man thinks of a woman with a shrug, and is obliged to force himself into an attitude of consideration, then her power is gone. It was undoubtedly true that Claudia's behaviour in the affair of the stolen pearl had checked him on the very threshold of that intimacy which she desired, and that now he did not even have a hand upon the doorbell. She was always an agreeable companion, and Carnegie read to her, played chess, took her out on the *Señorita* with great willingness; but if she showed a disposition toward confidences he usually had letters to write.

Yet he was sorry for Claudia, for even to his eye the affair had left its mark upon her. She had lost colour and weight, her

eyes were restless, a sudden sound caused her to start nervously. The mere possibility that there was a thief in the house would have been enough thus to affect many women, but Claudia had been always placid, indifferent, stolid to the verge of insensibility. Now she clung to Carnegie in a sort of nervous dependence which mere kindness would not let him repel. Yet when he suggested once more to send for a detective she positively shuddered in revolt at the idea, and her eyes grew large. At times her manner was uneven, vibrating from great haughtiness to mere petulance; and she never ceased to accuse him directly of coldness and want of confidence. "I am so interested in all you are doing, and you won't talk to me about it!" was her plea.

"It's too technical; it would bore you," was his patient excuse. And like as not she would veer round and agree with him.

"Perhaps you are right. I dare say I'm not clever enough to understand. I wish I were!" she would say, not realizing that her

changeableness only served to confirm Carnegie's instinct to reticence.

He began seriously to long for the end of his visit, but he was committed for a month, and still could not make up his mind that he ought to leave his cousin, under the circumstances.

So this week, so uneventful to the casual eye, drew to a close; and the turn of affairs came with a change of weather. On the evening when a bank of gray clouds covered the west in place of the usual sunset splendour Peter handed Carnegie a note from Aguiras, unsigned, running as follows:

"I desire to see you at your earliest convenience on a matter of the greatest importance, which we talked upon in our last interview."

The stately mystery of this epistle amused Carnegie highly, but Peter handed it to him with an air of intense seriousness. "He says it has to do with work," said the boy significantly. "How he trusts you!"

"I'll come in the morning," Carnegie replied, hiding a smile.

Up to this moment he had rather avoided than sought Aguiras, hampered as he was in dealing with the Cuban. Though he had no further clew than the nocturnal visit to connect Aguiras with the loss of the pearl, yet he held to his opinion of conspiracy between Aguiras and Jacoby—a conspiracy with which also he was directly prevented from dealing. This note gave him an opportunity "to use my well-known eloquence!" he thought, as he cleaned his revolver.

"I'm half inclined," he told himself, "to ignore Claudia's absurd prohibition altogether. Foolish woman! But, hang it! I can't, of course."

While these ideas were running through his mind he was in his room, finishing some letters for the mail. His work was done, and he had just written that fact to his chief, telling him it would be despatched to him in a day or two. Carnegie looked at the completed pile with regret. "Claudia will never

leave me alone if I tell her it was done yesterday!" he reflected. Carnegie sealed and addressed the letter and took it downstairs. He made his customary examination of the mail, found nothing suspicious, and, depositing his own letter in the bag, went in to dinner.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME ASPECTS OF A PATRIOT.

THE day was gray and lowering as Carnegie set about this second interview. He had made no excuses to Claudia, for he expected to return by the time she usually made her appearance downstairs. Tide and wind together delayed him in crossing the bay, and it took a bit of stiff rowing to get his boat safely turned in the eddy of the stream. Once ashore he made up for lost time, and mounted up the brookside against an astonishingly piercing raw wind, which roared through the windings of the gorge. Half an hour's walking brought him to the log bridge, and, crossing this, he soon espied two figures in the pathway. They were Aguiras and Peter Brent. As Carnegie climbed up and drew near the boy smiled him

a greeting, and strolled off into the woods in order to leave them undisturbed in their talk.

Carnegie glanced expectantly at Aguiras, who had also merely nodded. The Cuban was leaning against a tree, his arms folded in his own statuesque fashion. His face showed an imperfectly controlled excitement, he was biting his lips, and his eyes were bloodshot. Involuntarily, knowing his hot and hasty temper, Carnegie's hand moved to his hip pocket and touched something cold there. He smiled.

"Well, old man, what is it?" he began cheerfully. Aguiras glanced to right and left into the gray and green shadows of the wood, and, making a gesture for Carnegie to follow, he stepped aside a few paces till he came upon an open space, carpeted with pine needles. Then he turned swiftly and fiercely on the American.

"I have been deceived in that Jacoby!" he cried, his face working.

Carnegie did not seem surprised. He

merely raised his eyebrows and leaned idly against a white birch trunk.

"He has played me false; I doubt his friendship to liberty and the cause!" shouted Aguiras, working himself into a passion. "I hear he has left your Château Gui."

"You heard truly. He left a week ago."

"He has sent me no word, no word! No address! Nothing!"

"What a pity!" murmured Carnegie politely.

"But I will revenge myself! Where is he?"

"How should I know?"

Aguiras checked his frantic pacing to and fro, to thrust his distorted face into his friend's. "You do not know? You were in the house when he departed. He must have told you. You do not know? I say you know something!" The tone was undisguisedly threatening. All the suavity and dignity of his manner had given way to sinister anger. His eyes were within six inches of Carnegie's, who, with no change in his expression and

only a tightening of the smiling mouth, withdrew his left hand from his pocket and took hold of Aguiras's right with a movement that was perfectly quiet, almost deliberate. Carnegie drew the hand he held to his trousers pocket and pressed it hard upon the round, cold muzzle behind the cloth.

"I wouldn't use that tone," he remarked, as he released the hand.

"Forgive me, my true friend!" cried Aguiras, with a gesture of despair. He began to pace up and down again. "I am not myself! I am puzzled, distracted, mad!" And he wrung Carnegie impetuously by the hand and shed a few tears. The American, checking the Cuban's evident impulse to embrace him, waited till they were dried.

"Suppose we go over this quietly," he suggested. "There is really no need for all this emotion. Let me see if I understand what has happened."

"Ah, that Jacoby!" murmured Aguiras into his handkerchief. He sank into a sitting position at the roots of a tree.

“Please correct me if I am wrong,” Carnegie proceeded. “You came here two weeks ago for two reasons: first (of course) for a rest in the mountains; second, because you had heard that the Princess Sarrazine was the present owner of that valuable jewel which had originally been the property of your own family.”

He paused, and Aguiras, from his despondent position on the ground, merely shrugged his shoulders.

“I don’t know how you found this out.”

“It is simple! She wore it to the theatre!” declared Aguiras triumphantly.

“You also found that this man Jacoby was her guest. And you entered into a conspiracy with him to get possession of the pearl——”

Aguiras interrupted this sentence. “Pardon me!” said he, with a resumption of dignity. “Here you are misinformed. That scoundrel had no knowledge of my interest in the pearl—none whatever! Am I a fool?

It is true that, having diplomacy, delicacy, finesse, not like you Yankees a pistol in my clothes merely"—Carnegie smiled—"I made a tool of this Jacoby, and used my interview with him to perfect a plan I had in mind to recover my own again!"

"And this plan?"

Aguiras drew himself proudly to his full height, and assumed (mentally) the toga.

"To throw myself at the feet of your cousin and implore justice from her in the name of liberty!" was his magnificent declaration. Carnegie looked at him; his gaze was lofty.

"What reason did you have to think she would consent?" inquired the American quietly. "Ladies do not often give their jewellery to strangers."

"She was a woman, beautiful and tender-hearted. And I felt confidence in my truth, upheld by my sacred cause! I told myself, 'Be eloquent, be strong, be yourself, and she will listen, she will soften—maybe she will weep.' I planned to present myself to her

in an unguarded, unprejudiced moment. Jacoby was to aid me, but he thought I was to ask for money alone. My nocturnal visit was for the purpose of arranging the details of an interview."

"And your excuses to me about this visit?" asked Carnegie, with sternness.

"Diplomatic evasion merely!" replied Aguiras airily. "How did I know I could trust you?"

"Then what was Jacoby in it for?" was Carnegie's next question, letting the above reply pass. The words roused once more the Cuban's anger, and he gesticulated furiously.

"He played me the friend of Cuban liberty! He told me of European sympathizers eager to aid us! I give him names, figures, information, everything! For the sake of the cause I play on him, I flatter him."

"Well, what happens?"

"What happens? He has gone, broken his word to me—I have not the interview with the princess! I have committed breach

of etiquette of the society, and he has secrets with him! Do you wonder I shall be revenged?"

"But the pearl?" Carnegie said, puzzled and incredulous.

"I can not alone meet your cousin! I may not penetrate the Château Gui! My chance is lost to regain the pierced pearl of Aguiras, and lost through that—" The end of the sentence was involved in a whirlwind of Spanish-English objurgation.

Carnegie considered. He had believed the first story from its revelation of character, and this second seemed also equally consistent. It was evident that he must believe neither, but act promptly as the circumstances seemed to point. He stepped forward, and his manner became concentrated.

"The princess wishes to recover her pearl," said he rapidly, "and at once! Your story is pretty, but the appearances are against you. I give you just three minutes to hand it over or tell me where it is hidden." He buried his hand significantly in

his trousers pocket. Aguiras faced him blankly.

"Who? Me—I?" he said piteously. "But I tell you he failed me. I do not have the chance!"

"That won't do. The pearl has been a week missing. If you don't give in now I shall have to use force. Quick!" he added rapidly, "the game's up!"

Of this speech Aguiras seemed to hear only one word. He stared at Carnegie like a maniac. Then he cast himself frantically on the ground and embraced Carnegie's knees. "Missing? My pearl gone? Not gone!" were the only English words he was able to get out. The man's voice was hoarse, and his face streamed with tears.

"Oh, get up, get up!" cried the American angrily. "You know it is gone as well as I do. And I want it!"

He might as well have talked to the brook. Aguiras raged. He dashed his head against a tree, wrung his hands, stamped, wept, cursed. There was no mistaking the

sincerity of his furious grief, and Carnegie was forced to the conclusion that Jacoby, and Jacoby alone, was the real culprit. Whatever the original position of the two may have been, it was evident that Aguiras had been manipulated and completely fooled. Carnegie's mind was made up to immediate action, Claudia or no Claudia.

Meanwhile, he waited impatiently for the passion of Aguiras to subside. When the first noisy outbreak was over, the Cuban sat upon the ground, pale and sullen, muttering indistinct vengeance. The sound had drawn Peter to the spot, and he stood parting the bushes and looking at the two men, startled and shocked. Carnegie became exasperated. The opening for action had affected him as always, and made him swift, concentrated, intense. He paced the ground with long steps, like a restless beast of prey.

"If we are to catch the fellow, it must be seen to at once!" he addressed Aguiras. "You must go this minute to the telegraph office."

"Go yourself! Ah, I shall be revenged!"

"I do not know the way, and we are losing precious time. You are not forwarding your revenge by sitting here!"

Aguiras nodded his head, repeating: "It will come. Patience, patience! I have written a friend in New York asking questions about that black-hearted pig!"

"Rather late in the day!" cried Carnegie. "If you had told me the truth ten days ago this need not have happened."

Here Peter's clear, young voice broke in: "He lied to you?"

Carnegie laughed contemptuously for an answer, and addressed Aguiras once more. "Will you or will you not take me to the telegraph office without delay?" he demanded authoritatively. But the tone offended Aguiras, who was undergoing a reaction.

"I am tired—it is too far," he repeated sullenly. "I must think and plan."

"Man—the time!"

"I will go to-morrow!"

Carnegie set his teeth, and at this instant Peter stepped forward.

"I know the way," said he, looking at Carnegie, who had almost forgotten his presence.

"Good little Peter will go!" said Aguiras, delighted. But "good little Peter" deigned no answer. His face was pale and his lip curled.

"There's a short cut through the woods I know," he said, directly addressing Carnegie, and without another word the two set out.

"Thank you!" said Peter explosively, before they were out of sight.

"For what? Oh, now don't jump to the other extreme, my boy! He's not a bad fellow, and his tears are merely racial!"

"You are more charitable than I am!" Peter replied, and quickened his pace.

CHAPTER X.

ROBBERY AND A PANIC.

It was now about eleven o'clock. They were on the path above the brook, about a mile below The Lodges. Carnegie had no idea of the right direction, but Peter seemed certain of it.

"The trail we want used to come out just beyond here," he explained, throwing sharp glances to right and left of the path. "As I remember, it cuts across the hill through the forest, and comes out on the mail-carrier's track about five miles from the fishing village. From there it's only a mile or two to the telegraph office, and we ought to arrive soon after the mail."

"The carrier leaves the village at eight o'clock," objected Carnegie.

“Yes, but his way is much longer than ours. Here’s the trail now.”

Carnegie would not have called it a trail, but Peter plunged confidently into the gorge, like Ariel “through brush, through brier,” with almost as light a step. The torrent, swollen at this point, checked them for a time, till they found a place to cross it, jumping from rock to rock where the water boiled between. A dense tangle of undergrowth must be fought through, the hill climbed by the aid of the faint trail; and finally they came out, to Carnegie’s inward surprise, on the mail-carrier’s road from the village. It was a forest road, grassy and moist, the great trees meeting overhead, and wide enough for the two to walk abreast. In the ravines and cuts of the mountains the morning air had been damp and chilly, the east wind boisterous; but, sheltered as they now were in the wood, the shade of the overcast sky was only pleasant. The banks of the torrent had been cold and damp; here the air was drier.

“Peter,” said Carnegie warmly, “you are

the best mountaineer I know. How did you ever keep that trail?"

Peter's cheek reddened. "I've been over it before," said he a little brusquely.

"You give me and my concerns a great deal of your time. I'm really much obliged for your help," Carnegie spoke, almost shyly, and Peter, glancing up, smiled and gave a little quick nod.

"I want," said Carnegie, after an instant's pause, "one of these days, to have a talk with you about your future, if you will let me. Of course you know I take an interest in it, and I'd like to have the privilege of discussing your plans, if you think my advice is likely to be of any service."

Peter's reply to this speech was as far as possible from the conventional.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Carnegie!" said he, turning his head away. "I'm sure it will be, if any can!"

"If any can, Peter?"

"I mean"—the boy spoke with decided effort—"the life that is laid out for Dora

and myself is—nothing is likely to change it. Circumstances force—circumstances, I say, oblige us to keep rather out of—away from other people and— Hard work makes one live in seclusion, and I—that is, Dora—I shall just go on working, and perhaps do something good some day.” The incoherence was so unlike his usual frank, clear speech that Carnegie glanced at him.

“You must tell me about your circumstances more fully some day,” said he gently. Peter met his eyes with a much older look in his own brown ones, and shook his head.

“No, Mr. Carnegie”—he spoke not quite steadily—“I am afraid not! Why should I? You’ve been very kind! Just think of us as two young artists you met one summer, and forget all the rest.”

“You don’t know me,” said Carnegie, who seemed to trace a boyish Quixotism in this speech. “I don’t mean to forget. We will have good times together, you and I, in New York yet. I’ve some rather nice pictures myself,” he added; thinking meanwhile,

"Father in trouble probably, or something of that kind. Poor children!"

It was noon before they came in sight of the telegraph office and railroad station. The office was shut, the operator at dinner; but in a place of that size it did not take Carnegie long to hunt him up and despatch the messages, which were long ones. One of them was to an English officer he knew in Halifax; the other to his friend Barstow on board the steam yacht Nereid, Bar Harbor. He was paying for them, when Peter slipped into the office.

"Isn't it strange!" he told Carnegie. "The mail missed the train this morning, and hasn't come yet! They've sent a couple of men back to find out what is the matter."

Carnegie remembered several important letters and was annoyed, but in talking with Peter he soon forgot all about it. They walked briskly on the homeward way, for Carnegie realized that Claudia must be wondering where he was. He made haste, therefore, but was destined to meet with delays.

About four miles from the ocean, just where the forest was densest, they met a man running at top speed. "Mail robbed!" he called out as he passed. "Man killed!" And he was out of sight, the pad-pad of his flying feet coming to their ears.

Without exchange of words the two broke into a run, and Carnegie, distancing Peter, arrived first at a spot where he heard voices. In a thicket just off the wood road the mail-carrier's cart lay, upset on its side. The horse had been detached from the shafts and fastened to a tree. The poor beast's whinny had evidently been the means of attracting attention, for nothing was visible of the catastrophe from the road. The body of a man lay doubled up on the ground beside the cart, and nearby was the canvas mail bag, slit from end to end. When Carnegie arrived two men were bending over the unconscious mail carrier, and it needed but a glance to assure the newcomer that the fellow was only badly stunned. After a short time he opened his eyes with a sigh, but appeared too shaken

and confused to give any account of what had taken place.

“Some sundowner’ll pay for this!” cried one of his companions. “Say, Bill, hain’t ye no idea who ’twas done it?” Bill had no idea. He had been jogging peacefully along, when something had descended on his head, and, as he put it, “knocked me silly.” When he was able to sit up, and was partially revived by judicious use of that staple article of a Prohibition State, he hazarded a theory that it was “furri-ners.”

“What sort, Bill?” he was asked eagerly; but when he said solemnly “Spanyards!” the others broke into loud laughter.

“They hain’t stole much, either,” said one of the men, picking up the mail bag. “Pretty much what’s allus inside it, seems to me.” Carnegie examined the bag. The piles of letters had many of them not even been untied. He came across two letters in the princess’s handwriting, but it was only after careful search that it dawned upon him that

he had found not one of his own. The princess's had been posted at the same time; hers were safe, but his own were gone. Of course it was impossible to say what others had likewise been stolen, but the disappearance of his own rather important letters brought the robbery home to Carnegie in a fashion far from pleasant. Vague ideas began to float and form in his mind: who could gain by taking his letters, particularly that official one which notified the head of his department at Washington that his reports would shortly be sent? Perhaps— A nervous feeling attacked Carnegie not wholly under his control. He withdrew from the group, and beckoned Peter to him.

“ I must get home at once! ” he said hurriedly. “ This has changed my plans a little. I must run on to the village and sail over to the Château Gui instead of rowing. Good-bye.”

“ Can't I help? ” Peter asked, with a look of disappointment.

“ No, not now. Come to-morrow after-

noon to the place where you sketch; we'll talk about it then."

He wrung the boy hastily by the hand, and without a backward look set off with long strides down the path. He had no definite idea what the affair might signify or what he dreaded. He was simply in a fever to get back to the Château Gui and see to the safety of his belongings and papers. He was shaken with distrust. The princess's odd conduct during his visit came prominently before his mind, and the chain of events became a consecutive series of enigmas. Just what he suspected, just what he feared, just how Aguiras and Jacoby, Claudia and the pearl, became connected in his mind with this mail robbery, he was not in a clear enough mood to determine. The thoughts were all seething and boiling together in his head, ready for the first touch of further information to clarify and crystallize them. But the predominant thought was the robbery of himself. It is true that he repeated over and over insistently: "Why rob me? Who should

wish to do so? What could they do with my papers? Nothing. My reports are of no use—of no use! There is no enemy, no navy to use them! It's absurd—ridiculous!" But common sense was powerless against intuitive suspicion, and imagination had always an "if" to throw in. As he walked, Carnegie became more and more swiftly carried forward on the crest of a wave of excitement; his reason was powerless to resist a feeling that had so speedily assumed the proportions of a panic.

He reached the village breathless, and, chafing at delays, got a sloop and man to sail him round the point. It was a distinct surprise for him to find that the day still lowered and threatened, that the wind was almost a gale. There in the woods he had forgotten the weather. Not usually reckless, Carnegie on this occasion would have no reefs. The water boiled over the rail, the boat hung on, shaking, and righted with a jerk that sent the flying spray all over her. Never had they made better time for the six

miles, yet he found it all too slow. When they got up to the stone pier, he sprang out, without thanks to the boatman, and dashed up to the house. The first drops of sullen rain fell as he ran.

Somehow he had hardly expected to see the house stand so solid, so calm, girdled with brilliant flower beds. He entered, ran upstairs two steps at a time to his room. The house was quiet, the servants moved about their errands, only the clatter of his entrance disturbed the peace. And how quiet, how sinister quiet, he thought was his room in its fresh order! He was soaked in salt water, but change of clothes must wait. On his knees before his trunk he groped among clothing for his reports. Things looked disordered to his imagination, and his fingers closed on stuff—a chill contracted his heart! The next second he touched them, drew them forth, and found them, of course, intact.

A great wave of reaction swept over Carnegie, and the panic of the last two hours

seemed at once unfounded and weak. He had been high strung; a trifle had sent him off the handle, like a woman! Of course everything was all right; he was ashamed to think how much he had founded on the loss of a letter. Imagination had run away with him on a simple, not to say vulgar, matter of theft. The idea that his effects should be tampered with in Claudia's house—he felt mortified that he had cherished such thoughts!

Rain pattered on the windows as he put on dry clothes, and, somewhat depressed in mood, went to seek his hostess in her boudoir. Her manner to him was distant, and Carnegie all the day was penitent and devoted. He was also very weary, but his conscience told him he owed her atonement. It was indirectly to his conscience, therefore, that he was indebted for everything which followed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PAGE.

THIS sense of reaction continued during the following day. The threatened storm had passed over, the weather was clear; but Claudia complained of headache, and did not wish to go out of doors. So Carnegie spent the morning reading aloud to her in her boudoir, and strenuously kept his eyes from wandering beyond the printed page to the sunlit lawn and blue sea without. But his mind was not much on the book, and in the midst of a sentence he uttered an exclamation. She glanced up inquiringly.

“I have just remembered your runaway sister-in-law! Did you make any inquiries in New York?”

“A few, but they came to nothing. I fancy she goes under an alias; or—who knows—she may not have stayed there?”

“Too bad of me to forget my promise of assistance,” Carnegie said penitently; “but I was so busy. When I get back I’ll attend to it.”

“I’ve changed my mind,” said the princess slowly, playing idly with a long strand of embroidery silk. “After all, it will be best to leave her alone. She may be tired of it by this time and want to come back, which would be very awkward.”

“I don’t see why!” Carnegie laid aside the open book. “It is dreadful to think of a motherless young girl set adrift like that. My own feeling is that you ought to leave no stone unturned to find her and persuade her to come live with you.”

“Live with me? My dear Hugh!” Claudia’s expression left no doubt as to her feelings on this point. “You don’t realize what you suggest at all. A girl with such a story

attached to her would be a social millstone round my neck. I never could get any one to marry her!"

"There's nothing so heinous in Tatiana's story!"

The princess gave one of her placid laughs. "My dear Hugh, you don't suppose she is *alone!*" she said, in a tone of amusement which jarred on Carnegie.

"Of course I think so! You have no reason to think anything else!" he declared warmly. "It was a foolish, romantic thing to do, but a child like that has every excuse. She ought to be with you—you have nobody; and she needs an older woman's care—some one to look after her!" His form of argument was not happy, and Claudia stiffened.

"It would be rather ludicrous, wouldn't it," she said impersonally, "for me to be guardian and chaperon to a girl so nearly my own age?"

"Why, she must be only twenty-two!" was Carnegie's unguarded remark.

“Well?” said the princess sharply, and he recovered himself with an inward prayer.

“Of course!” said he hastily; “but isn’t that an advantage, Claudia? It brings you more into sympathy. I’ve thought of it so often! Here you are very much alone in the world, and here is this girl in need of just such a friend. It would give you an object in life—and we all need that, women most of all. Then it would give you a companion and an occupation; and think of the satisfaction, the honest joy, Claudia, of teaching this poor child the meaning of a home!” He spoke earnestly, meaning to convey delicately to her his own opinion as to the needs of her life.

“Really, I have other things to do than look after Sarrazine’s shady relatives!” she remarked coldly, and her features set into woodenness.

“Isn’t that rather harsh, Claudia?”

“Not at all! The girl has put herself outside the pale, and I could never have anything to do with her. You forget my position!”

Carnegie felt that they were more at a deadlock than ever before, but he made one effort. "Where so much good might be done—so much kindness——"

She interrupted him, her voice showing traces of impatience: "My dear Hugh, you are not talking *en homme du monde*. It may be a pity, all this, but it's the way of the world. Men are always ready to defend and take up a woman who is a little *outré*—I suppose it amuses them. But single men do not constitute society, Hugh, although they are apt to forget that fact."

Carnegie took up the book again with a faint dissenting shrug. "They are not all so charitable as you are," the princess ended graciously; but he only rejoined, "I think we left off here," and went on reading.

After a while he closed the book and made an excuse to go out. Each succeeding discussion with Claudia had the effect of slightly lessening his admiration for her, and for others of her class. The hardness, the constantly personal attitude which

cramped her natural intelligence, the absence of naturalism, of spontaneity, and, above all, her narrow point of view, on which apex she was certainly trying to support the pyramid of the universe—all these qualities were like wedges pushing them apart.

With these truths in mind, Carnegie took the rowboat and made his way to the point where he expected to find Peter awaiting him, and was not disappointed. The boy came to meet him on the rocks, full of eager questions about yesterday, and they discussed the events of their expedition for some time. But Carnegie had something else in mind, and he broached it during the first pause, when Peter seemed momentarily absorbed in his drawing.

“Of what nationality are you?” he asked abruptly.

The boy glanced at him startled. “Why do you want to know?” said he evasively.

“For a reason. Won’t you tell me?”

“If you like. I am half English, half Russian.”

"And you have no relative living?"

"Not one, to count."

"You are sure?" Carnegie persisted.

"I told you." The boy gave himself a petulant shake.

"I want you to hear me," said Carnegie gravely, "and not to speak till I have finished. I happen to be alone in the world, and I take an interest in you, Peter. I believe you have talent, I have confidence in it, but I think you ought to have a fuller education. No, don't speak—wait!"

Clearly and simply he unfolded his plan to send the boy to college and to Europe if he would consent. He laid stress on the fact that he believed the benefit to Peter's art would more than repay him, and that the boy might regard the advance as a loan. He spoke of Dora, of their loneliness in the world, of his own similar loneliness, and of his wealth. He was eloquent by reason of kindness, and spoke well. A long silence followed his words; Peter's head was turned away, but the outline of crimson cheek and

the clinched hand served to show Carnegie that a struggle was going on. He waited some moments, then, speaking the boy's name, he touched him kindly on the shoulder. The effect was electric. Peter sprang up, his face flaming; he made an odd foreign gesture of the hands, as if to warn Carnegie away.

"Ah!" he cried; "I can not stand it another instant!"—then, with a sob—"it makes me tell too many lies!" The last word set all Carnegie's face into a white sternness, as the other hurried on, wildly, vehemently, the words broken with sobs:

"Oh, if you were not so kind! Nobody has ever been so kind. How I hated these private theatricals! Though Dora says I can not tell you, yet I must—I will! Everything I have told you is a lie—all of it lies!—Peter and Dora and all! Oh, I meant no harm! And it did no harm before you came, before you were so kind! Now I can not stand it—I am too ashamed!"

"Would you mind explaining yourself?"

said Carnegie, in his most expressionless tones. The other was struggling with a flood of words.

“If you could only understand! But of course you will not. For artists it is different; and I had left everything else behind me. And then, oh!—there was nothing else to do. Dora had to come—she had been ill—don’t you see? What could I do? There was no more harm in the beginning than in Rosalind and Celia; but when you came you asked questions—and you were—so kind—” Sobs drowned out the words. Carnegie sat on a rock in stupefaction.

“Has that woman told you anything about it? How I hate her! You must have heard my name—it is Tatiana Sarrazine!”

“Well, upon my soul!” cried Carnegie impetuously. “I *have* been a fool!”

She put out her hand in protest, the tears running down her cheeks, and then buried her head in her hands, and was shaken by her sobbing.

The sight of this desperate grief roused

Carnegie, and changed his astonishment into distress.

“Don’t cry like that—you mustn’t!” he begged her nervously. “Pray don’t; there’s no need—really!”

The words “ashamed,” “despised,” reached him from among the sobs.

“No, no, indeed!” cried he impulsively: “Never, my dear boy—I mean—nonsense. Peter, of course not! Why, any idiot would have seen it,” he went on eagerly. “I don’t know why I didn’t, I’m sure! And there’s no harm done, anyhow—you wear them very well—” He broke off, cursing his own embarrassment. This felicitous speech was evidently too much for Tatiana. With a low cry she sprang up, and in two minutes he had seen the last of her, running wildly among the pines. She had not turned her face to him, and her sketchbook lay at his feet among the stones. He stooped and picked it up. The silence seemed intense, though gulls were crying out at sea and the waves splashed among the boulders. He looked

longingly after her, wishing that he had called her back. Then he drew a long breath and sat down. What a fool he had been!

He turned the leaves of the sketchbook idly. How bold and firm the drawings were, how full of character! Here was a caricature of Claudia, humorously exaggerating all her characteristics, her dress, her figure, and her elaborate coiffure. A pearl the size of a toy balloon was drawn at her neck, and inside it appeared the words, "Other People's Property!" Dora had scribbled underneath the sketch the title, "La Veuve Inconsolable." Carnegie's lip twitched with amusement; he turned a page and came upon his own head, admirably drawn, with his initial and the date in the corner. Dora had evidently labelled this sketch also, but the title had been rubbed out, and he wondered what it might have been. His mind played over these things, as the mind often does when in the presence of thoughts with which, sooner or later, it must come to grips.

How bravely she had faced him at the

last! How her eyes flashed, how full of vitality she was, how utterly different from all other women! He must hear the whole story, though in his own mind she was already absolved from blame. She had done nothing so terrible. Why, Rosa Bonheur—Just here his thoughts ceased to be consecutive, and he sank into a sort of bewilderment, living over each second of the interview. When he came to himself he found that he was smiling, and looked about as if surprised to find himself where he was. Then he rose. “Undoubtedly,” he said seriously, aloud, “she would never get on with Claudia!”

His night was restless and uncomfortable. So absorbed was his mind in its intense recollection of all that had passed that he had to recall himself with an effort to the practical affairs of life. Things around seemed vague and dreamlike; the only real thing was that quivering face, the eyes shining in tears, the little gesture of remorse and despair. A nervous, uncomfortable feeling, too, arose in him, a result of the fact that there was no time set

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for him to see her again—and see her again he must. “I must tell her not to feel so badly,” he assured himself, as he sat wearily in Claudia’s presence. The day passed and he did not see Tatiana; and by the next day the affair had grown very serious, much more important, much more engrossing than such trifles as the missing pearl, or the mysterious Jacoby, or the war with Spain.

Something must be done about it at once, and he made some lame excuse to Claudia of work. The day was foggy, like Carnegie’s brain, and they were seated in the drawing-room before a crackling, cheerful little fire. The princess looked up from her book.

“You must have nearly finished that important work of yours?” she remarked.

“I have,” replied Carnegie, looking out of the window.

“Go get it!” said Claudia briskly. “I want to see it, Hugh, and have you explain it to me. I’m really more interested than you will believe!” and she smiled brightly

on him. But he made no movement to obey her.

"It would bore you to death, princess."

"Let me be judge of that! Come, we have nothing to do, and the weather is abominable. My brain needs stimulating; you shall see how cleverly I will understand your reports."

Carnegie tried to turn aside her request.

"I mustn't bore my hostess by talking shop," said he, and sat down by the hearth.

"Really, I'm in earnest, Hugh!"

"Nonsense!" He smiled in turn at her. She looked a little hurt.

"You won't let me beg of you?" There was an undercurrent of meaning in these words, and he moved restlessly.

"I can't, really," said he, a trifle impatiently; "and it wouldn't interest you a particle."

"Then you have no confidence in me!" she cried agitatedly.

Carnegie groaned in spirit, but tried to answer considerately. "On the contrary;

but this is not wholly my affair, and—Claudia, won't you take my word for it that you would not be amused?"

"Won't you take mine for it that I will? It is enough for me that it is your work."

"Awfully good of you," said he uncomfortably, "but——"

"Do you think me so stupid, so unworthy to be told anything?" she pleaded.

"That's not the question. I'm sorry, but I can't."

"May I ask you, then, as a proof of friendship?" said Claudia gravely, raising her head.

"Such a trifle, princess, is——"

"Friendship is made up of trifles, Hugh. And you have often protested yours—prove it!"

"But don't you see how absurd——"

"Then I am to believe your protests meant nothing?"

"My dear Claudia, how unreasonable!"

They had risen, and stood facing one another. Her eyes were fixed upon his face with an unwonted intensity. The soft dra-

peries of her gown fell about her, and she was a beautiful woman.

“Indeed you won’t regret reposing confidence in me,” she said, making a gesture toward him with her clasped hands. “Indeed you won’t!”

She came nearer and looked into his face, which her breath reached, and laid a hand upon his arm while she spoke in that intimate voice. “You think I’m foolish, but—it means so much to me. I’ve come to mistrust most people, but you—you are different. Give me this proof of your friendship for me, Hugh—this trifling proof would make me so happy! You will, I’m sure—I shall be content, I promise!”

It was impossible to mistake the emotion in her voice and face, but it had a very different effect from what she anticipated. Nothing is so alarming to a man as the intimation of affection from a woman to whom he is indifferent, and Carnegie felt a wave of cold all over him. He was not a whit moved by the supple waist so close to him,

the lovely face so near his own, the warm weight of her arm.

"I'd do anything you wish, my dear cousin," said he, moving a step away, and using a perfectly matter-of-fact voice, "except this. It is a business matter, you see, and so I can't."

The blood rushed over her face. "It means you *won't*—it means—I understand. You don't care—and I—oh, my God! What shall I do! What shall I do!"

Standing where she was, the princess covered her face, and he saw her shoulders shake, though her tears were quiet. He was mortally uncomfortable, but not in the least touched; indeed, something in the avowal rather revolted him. "You are nervous and tired," he remarked, moving to the bell. "Let me ring for Varinka!"

She checked the movement by catching his sleeve and looked up piteously, but most solemnly and significantly, into his face.

"Think better of it, Hugh!" She seemed to weigh her words. "You won't regret

showing me the reports. You had better do it, Hugh, and I promise you won't be sorry!"

He was puzzled, though not yielding at all, for he had never seen Claudia so moved. Her very lips were pale.

"My dear cousin," he answered decidedly, "don't you think we are getting on rather a melodramatic plane? Seriously, much as I desire to please you, I can not commit a breach of etiquette for you or any one. I must positively and finally refuse!"

"You have the chance; you won't regret it," she repeated, trembling. "Won't you trust me?"

"I would like to know," said Carnegie, looking at her, "the reason you are so anxious about it?"

"Just this one proof!"

"It is a whim I decline to indulge!" said he, perhaps brutally, but his forbearance was exhausted. The princess bent her head thoughtfully, then she moved away with an odd, high-pitched laugh, which gave Carnegie a start.

“Well, Hugh, you’re a fine fellow,” she remarked lightly, “and I ought to be proud of you. Beg pardon for the melodrama, but you roused all the perversity in me. I am more sensible now.” She dropped into a chair and laughed again, loud and long.

“Hysterical!” he thought, watching her. “Now, why the deuce——”

“Did I play well? Did you think me in earnest?” she asked him, recovering with difficulty from her fit of merriment.

“Yes, indeed!” he replied; “and I do still,” he added to himself.

“You’re a credit to your country!”—she was still laughing a little. “I won’t tease you by any more private theatricals, bad boy!” The words set him off in a daydream at once, and she had to speak twice to him before he heard.

“I beg your pardon,” he turned to her, flushing. She sat upright, looking at him with an indescribable expression in her eyes.

“Will you please ring for Varinka?” said she icily.

Carnegie took the hint, but as he stood in the doorway she smiled on him very graciously.

“To-morrow let’s go out in the yacht!” said she. “I’m so tired of the house!”

And then he left her.

CHAPTER XII.

TATIANA.

CARNEGIE came down to breakfast the next morning determined to cut short his visit to the Château Gui. The interview of yesterday had given him a bad half hour, and he had no doubt that an exit was advisable; but to his great surprise he found a change in the weather, so to speak, which checkmated his intention. Claudia had become once more his comrade of old days, easy and impersonal; all the paraphernalia of the past ten days, glances, inflections, significant suggestions of intimacy, had entirely vanished. She met him as the old Claudia used to meet him—frankly, simply, cousinly, without manner of any kind. To Miss Vesey she was affectionate, to the servants considerate; she seemed to have forgotten her whims, and be-

came again the sensible, serene great lady of the world. True, it was easy to detect a nervousness in her manner which suggested that the self-control she was exercising was of the fiercest, yet the strain of yesterday had vanished like a bad dream, and Carnegie felt that for him to revert to it would be in the worst possible taste.

After breakfast, instead of lingering with him on the piazza with a book, she announced briskly that she had household affairs. "If you care to write in the drawing-room, Hugh," she told Carnegie, "my desk is at your disposal."

He thanked her (he was indeed sincerely grateful to her for this change of tone), and, lighting a cigar, he seated himself at the desk in question. A footman came in as he was busy there and told him there was a boy outside with a note which required an answer.

"Show him in here!" Carnegie said thoughtlessly, and the man withdrew. Then Carnegie realized with a shock whom it might

be, but before he could recall the servant the door opened, and Tatiana entered the room.

She advanced with her head thrown up, her lips pressed firmly together. Carnegie rose, throwing away his cigar, and there was an instant of awkward silence between them, during which she refused to look at him. At length, however, she made the effort, and, stepping forward, handed him a note, with a murmur of something inarticulate. Carnegie made no motion to open the note.

“You must not—” he began, and stopped with a thrill, for the princess parted the curtains and came in.

“My friend Mr. Brent,” Carnegie hastened to explain.

“Ah, indeed!” said Claudia graciously, and made as if to put out her hand. But the boy drew back a pace, and bent his head stiffly in lieu of salutation. The two women stood thus facing one another.

“You shall have the answer in one moment,” said Carnegie hurriedly, and seated himself again to scribble a word of reply.

Claudia sank gracefully into a chair, and the messenger alone remained standing. Although he had his back turned to the two, Carnegie was vividly conscious of the contrast between them—the beauty, style, and elegance of the one; the grace, freedom, and proud bearing of the other.

“You live near here?” said Claudia, stifling a yawn.

“Yes, Madame la Princesse.”

“I did not know there were any houses near us. You do not live in the village?”

“No, Madame la Princesse—in the mountains.”

The title did not escape Claudia. “You are French?” she inquired, and Tatiana shook her head, without further words.

Carnegie interposed here, folding his note into the envelope. “I’m going to walk to the wharf with Peter,” he remarked, and paid no attention to Tatiana’s low protest.

“You honour him!” said Claudia from her chair, but did not turn her listless head to look as they left the room. The girl sped

over the lawn very fast, Carnegie following in silence. When they were some distance from the house, however, he slackened his pace, and forced her to do likewise.

"Mademoiselle Sarrazine," he began quietly, "you take all this a great deal too much to heart. Seriously, you have done nothing so criminal which need cause you to fly from me in this fashion!"

She shook her head speechlessly.

"Do you think it kind?" he went on. "I am as much your friend as I was Peter's."

"There is nothing to be said," she replied. "We must have no more to do with one another."

"But why? Now, is not that absurd? What have I done to be treated so?"

"You know very well that it is not you, but myself who is to blame," said she, and fled on faster. But Carnegie kept up with her and compelled her attention.

"You must not feel so badly, mademoiselle!" he spoke vehemently. "Who could think the worse of you for your masquerade?"

Not I, I assure you! Doubtless you had good reasons for it, which I wish to hear. Now, be sensible! Do not exaggerate this harmless jest. It was my own fault that I was taken in. I'm not a conventional person, and not in the least shocked. What does it matter what you wear? Come—please! I want to know all about it.”

She turned to him hesitatingly a face with dawning relief in it. They had reached the wharf, and Carnegie stood still.

“If I could feel sure you did not despise me,” she rejoined in an undertone.

“Now, what a ridiculous notion that is!” cried Carnegie warmly. “Why on earth should I? Have I deserved such treatment from you?” he added in an injured voice, and edged nearer to a pile of lumber at the head of the wharf. Tatiana evidently relented, for she sat down, her expression very thoughtful; and Carnegie, inwardly joyful, made haste to seat himself beside her. Both remained silent for a few moments, Tatiana with her head on her hands, look-

ing seaward; Carnegie's eyes were fixed upon her face.

"I know very well I am to blame for deceiving you," she said; "but, apart from that, I've thought it over, and I can not see that I did wrong." She spoke firmly, and he nodded encouragement. "Honestly, there was nothing else for us to do. You shall decide; listen! All I told you about Dora and myself is true, Mr. Carnegie, except, of course, that I am not a boy. We live and work together just as I described. Dora is an orphan, and a distant cousin of my dear governess, Miss Page. Her relatives live in Omaha, and she chums with me. Lots of girls—artists, musicians in New York—do it, you know!"

"Of course they do!" he assented heartily.

"Last spring," Tatiana continued, "Dora fell ill, and the doctor told me she must go away to spend the summer in some bracing air. We heard of the Lodges; we knew it was cheap and the climate just right. But could we two girls go alone?" She made a

gesture, placing the difficulty before him. "You see how it was! There was no place so suitable. I tried everywhere—everything was so dear! Then hot days came, and Dora got worse. So I made up my mind then and there. I cut off my hair! I'd worn the clothes often to pose for Dora and to ride at home," she laughed sadly. "They used to say I was as good a horseman as Sarrazine! Well, Dora has a brother in the West; I took his name. Some of the girls at The Lodges know, but they've kept it secret, because they know *why*. Then, students aren't particular about such things—as a rule. All went smoothly till—till you came! Dora grew ill; and I—I have always been more boy than girl. Perhaps it was wrong and immodest——"

"I do not think you immodest," said Carnegie.

"You mustn't think, though," Tatiana said, drawing her hand along the rough plank in some embarrassment, "that I disliked—that it was a penance at all! No; I must tell

you the truth—there was frolic in it for us.” A smile flickered into Carnegie’s eyes, which he suppressed sternly.

“Perhaps we might have found some other way,” confessed Tatiana. “I’ve thought of others since. But, yes! I liked to play Rosalind, and we talked about Rosa Bonheur to each other. It seemed so far away, where was the harm? So—I enjoyed it.”

There was something in the simplicity, spirit, and independence of the little narrative that appealed to Carnegie as natural. However it might be judged by conventional standards, the girl had made no bad use of her freedom. A certain largeness and energy in her likened her by nature to a fine boy. The masquerade had been without sophistication, and the spirit of frolic had not run beyond bounds; he knew by experience how little self-consciousness she had carried into it.

“But when you came,” her voice trembled, “then I hated myself—I was ashamed!”

"You needn't be, mademoiselle," he hastened to assure her. "There is no cause. I wouldn't have let you do this if I had known you, perhaps, but there is no reason for such agonies of remorse."

Tatiana smiled through wet eyelashes.

"Mayn't I hear the rest?" he asked gently.

"You mean, why I left home?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"I wonder if you will understand!" said she meditatively. "If you do not—well, you can not think worse of me than you do!"

"True," he assented gravely, and though she cried reproachfully, "Ah, now you are laughing!" yet her eyes met his and she smiled herself.

"Silly little girl!" said Carnegie tenderly, a speech for which she should have rebuked him, but she did not.

"I suppose *she* told you about me?" said Tatiana, with a wave of her hand toward the château.

“A little.” She laughed scornfully, and then her tone became matter-of-fact.

“I dare say she told you I was an orphan. My American governess was like my mother. She was herself an artist, Miss Page, and taught me all I know. Often and often she used to say, ‘Ah, if you could lead the artist life, what work you might not do!’ I lived with her in the old castle near Varsovie, studying, riding, very free and happy. I had a stepbrother; but I had not been brought up to think well of Sarrazine. He had always given us trouble. He drank and gambled, and he had lost money of mine, and there were worse things he had done. Oh, I knew how my father had felt toward him.” She shuddered, and went on vehemently: “And after his death things were no better! Sarrazine was unworthy to the core. When we heard he was to be married I was horrified to think that any woman would marry Sarrazine. Miss Page begged me not to think about it; but when I heard the girl was an American, not a French or Russian,

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who would expect no better, I could not get it out of my head. In particular, there was one thing I knew he had done—a disgraceful thing, which I believe caused my father's death. I can not tell you now, it is too horrible! But I thought she ought to know it. So I got our pope, who had been Sarrazine's tutor, to write and tell her, and beg her to consider well before she put her happiness into such hands. You see, we knew he only wanted the money, and I—it was foolish—but I wanted to save her."

"What did she reply?" Carnegie asked.

"She never replied to the letter herself. Instead, there came a letter from Sarrazine, in which he dismissed his old tutor, and told Miss Page that my education was finished, and that he had arranged a suitable marriage for me to a friend. Ah! marriage to a friend of Sarrazine's!" She laughed scornfully again.

"Then he fell ill and died," she continued more quietly, "and there was respite for me. I was under age then, Mr. Carnegie, but I

knew that I was to have some money—my mother's—on my twenty-first birthday. All those weeks after Miss Page left me, and Sarrazine lay ill, I was planning what I would do in case the marriage was suggested again. After his death she wrote me, and it was to tell me"—Tatiana's cheeks flamed, and she turned her head proudly to him as she spoke—"that she was head of the family and mistress of my home, and that as it was inconvenient for her to have me living in the castle I must prepare for the arranged marriage."

Carnegie drew a sharp breath, and clinched his hand.

"Then I made up my mind. I was all alone, and the only person who loved me was in America—I would go there. All our people loved me, and hated the new mistress, and they all helped me. Our steward found out for me a way to borrow a large sum of money on my fortune. I meant to work and study in New York, but I knew I had to have money. I had

not told Miss Page, but of course I went straight to her."

"And she said——"

Tatiana turned her sad eyes away. "When I reached her she was ill with typhoid fever," she said, in a low voice. She never knew me. She died. And so I was left all alone in America." There was a pause. The picture framed in Carnegie's mind unaccountably distressed him. Tatiana went on more briskly:

"I do not know what might have happened if it had not been for Dora. She made friends with me, and we decided to cast our fortunes together. So I worked and was content."

"There is no doubt about that?"

"None at all! I love my work; I am busy and free. We have warm friends, and we are more successful than many others. Even in my first winter I sold several black-and-white drawings. Some day I shall be an artist."

"You are never lonely?"

She reflected. "Not often; I am too busy. Not as lonely as I was at home without Miss Page, or as I would be married——" She left the sentence unfinished.

"But as you grow older," he persisted, "when the novelty has worn off?"

"What is the use," she replied seriously, "of asking that? I have chosen my life deliberately, and so long as I can work I don't believe I shall be unhappy."

They were silent again, for somehow he found no words to say to her. Finally he managed: "Then we are friends again?"

"Certainly!" She sprang up as she spoke. "What am I thinking of? I must get back with your answer."

He followed her reluctantly to the boat slip.

"I have let Aguiras know I am coming," said he. "Have you any idea what it is all about?"

"Not in the least," replied Tatiana, as she untied the painter of her boat and took up the oars. She moved with her usual

quickness, and Carnegie foolishly entreated her:

“It is quite rough; do be careful!”

She glanced up at him, all her face alight with a flash of fun. “Now, Mr. Carnegie, how very absurd you are! What’s in a name? You have been out with Peter Brent often enough to know that he can manage a boat.” She pushed off, and he watched her take the waves with long, firm strokes. For some time he stood as if fascinated by the dip and flash of her oars, and did not turn back to the house until he had seen her safe, in the act of landing on the other side of the bay.

CHAPTER XIII.

CARNEGIE TAKES PRECAUTIONS.

THE spot named by Aguiras in his note for a meeting place had been the log bridge at the juncture of the two streams. Carnegie arrived there at about three o'clock the same afternoon. His mind was so full of the morning's conversation that he did not even feel any curiosity as to what Aguiras might have to tell him. What did anything matter in comparison to the fact that Tatiana lived, had given him her confidence, and had called him her friend? A sense of exaltation moved him, vague and delicious; it made the row across the bay all too short, and lent his feet wings to climb the path. He did not name it to himself, but his soul knew what it was; and, being a normal, healthy, warm-hearted fellow, it took with him its

wonted course, raising all that was best in him, all that was kindly, enduring, and firm to the surface, and governing him thereby. It passed into his expression, and gave the keen features light; it let him approach Aguiras without contempt or harshness.

The Cuban was awaiting him in a frenzy of impatience. He called out to Carnegie before the latter had fairly reached him: "Aha, my friend! what did I tell you of that Jacoby! Listen! You shall hear! Listen!"

"Let me have a moment to get my breath," Carnegie replied, and just checked in time a movement to take off his hat to Tatiana, who sat at some distance upon an end of the fallen log. She gave him a little offhand nod, and concentrated her attention upon Aguiras, who, with twitching face and dilated pupils, waved an open letter in the air.

"Ah, listen, I tell you!" he repeated. "My correspondent cabled for information

to our people in Paris about that pig Jacoby!"

"You did not tell me that you—" began Carnegie, seating himself on a stump.

"Will you be silent and hear?" shouted Aguiras, stamping with annoyance. "I will read you what he says." He began to read from the open sheet distinctly, with gesticulation and much emphasis:

"*Leopold de Brissac Jacoby*, believed in Paris to be the alias of one *Rodriguez d'Arcos*, spy in the service of the Spanish Government. D'Arcos is well known in France, and is at present supposed to be in Cuba. He sailed for Santiago on a French ship last April. D'Arcos is something of a personage, who has for years been employed secretly against the Carlists. A gentleman by birth, he is a superb linguist and an accomplished actor—a chevalier d'industrie of the first quality. So far as can be ascertained, he is usually employed under the rose on missions of a more or less delicate character, and of

course unacknowledged at headquarters. When last heard from, d'Arcos was occupied in trying to sell on the quiet certain little-known gems belonging to the Spanish Crown, although this is believed here to have been a blind to cover more important operations. I need not warn you, my dear confrère, that this is an unscrupulous and exceedingly dangerous individual, against whom, should he have risen on your horizon, you must be closely on guard.' ”

“That is all he knows, but it is something—*hein?* ” and Aguiras folded the letter triumphantly. Both he and Tatiana then looked at Carnegie, who sat perfectly still.

“It is simply impossible!” said he positively.

“Impossible, is it?” cried Aguiras, vexed. “Look for yourself—read!” and he thrust the letter into Carnegie’s hand.

Carnegie took and read it deliberately, in a sort of stony quiet. The other two, watching him curiously, could not know why

he combated the information and would not let himself believe it. He read the two pages through slowly, his mind irresistibly laying hold of link by link, fitting the whole together into one coherent, logical explanation of the entire chain of events connected with the pierced pearl. Those few lines accounted for everything that had seemed so strange; for Claudia's possession of the pearl, for her certainty of the innocence of Jacoby, for her fear of him, for her treatment of Carnegie himself; and accounted for these, moreover, by a supposition beyond words base and shameful. The horror of it grew in Carnegie's eyes as he sat there thinking, oblivious even of Tatiana's presence, until it shone plain upon his shocked face. Was it possible to believe that Claudia—the Princess Sarrazine—his cousin, had been merely the tool of this spy, playing a part in an intrigue aimed directly at himself? He thought of yesterday's scene—was it wholly accountable to a fancy for him or was it a low and traitorous attempt upon his honour? Her persistence in

regard to his reports came back to him, and he realized with cold certainty that he had laid his finger upon Claudia's price—her payment for the coveted jewel. The thought was sickening; he uttered an exclamation, and sprang to his feet.

“Why didn't you tell me this before?” he said harshly to Aguiras.

“Before? It arrived but this morning!”

“Four hours ago!” Carnegie cried, and walked restlessly about.

Tatiana slipped off her log and ran to his side. “What is it—what's the matter?” she asked anxiously.

“Bad news, that's all—a shock, Peter!” he answered her, biting his under lip hard. All the pain of the discovery showed in his face for an instant; then, with an effort, he recovered himself, and became calm and self-possessed. The presence of visible danger menacing himself had the effect of steadying his nerves.

“Now we will consult, we will plan against this spy! We will be avenged!” said

Aguiras, rubbing his hands. "He shall not escape me—thief!"

"He seems to have gotten pretty well away already!" said Carnegie bitterly. "What do you propose to do?"

"Why, to be revenged—has he not taken my pearl?" The veins stood out upon Aguiras's forehead as he spoke.

"Damn the pearl!" said Carnegie savagely. "I wish it was at the bottom of the sea!"

Aguiras stiffened instantly into dignity. "You insult my house, señor!" he remarked. "I demand an instant apology, or——"

"Nonsense, Juan! I'm not going to quarrel with you. We have too much to do. I only meant to curse the trouble the pearl has brought us both. How do you propose to recover it, may I ask?" In his own mind Carnegie no longer believed that Jacoby had taken the pearl, but he wanted to hear what Aguiras had to suggest.

"I must plan a way," Aguiras replied.

“ You are mistaken, Carnegie, if you think I shall submit tamely to his theft, when I have his promise—his sacred word—to share the spoil with me! ”

“ Ah! ” Carnegie wheeled upon the Cuban with flashing eyes. “ It seems to me I remember your telling me that Jacoby knew nothing of your connection with the pearl,” he said.

Aguiras gave a shrug. “ You threatened me with a revolver,” he said sullenly. “ What was I to do? ”

“ So my first suspicion was right, after all! You had plotted to steal the pearl with Jacoby’s help—go halves with him! Why did you lie to me? ”

“ How was I to know,” replied Aguiras with some naïveté, “ that, when you heard how it was arranged, you would not demand a share? ”

At any other time Carnegie might almost have laughed, but instead he gave an inarticulate exclamation. From that moment he saw that Aguiras was to be counted out, and

he must do what he had to do alone. He looked across at Tatiana.

"I must send another telegram," said he, and she nodded. Then he said dryly to Aguiras: "You have made me lose much precious time. I do not know what harm you may not have done, but I must go at once and try to undo it. The society in New York will not thank you for this month's work."

"It was for my country. I needed money!" replied Aguiras superbly, and, Carnegie knew, sincerely. He made no reply, but, taking the sketchbook and pencil Tatiana handed him, began to write rapidly.

"But you are always so hasty!" objected Aguiras at this evidence of action. "We must think and plan!"

"I haven't time to plan. Will you take these, or shall Peter?"

"I am not your servant! You treat me as fit for nothing but to do your errands. I will not! My brain must think out its revenge!" he replied, sulky with disregarded dignity.

Tatiana stepped forward and took the papers from Carnegie's hands, with a bright, confident smile.

"Be careful!" he said to her in an undertone. "Take every precaution, and have them sent at once." He gave her money. "I would not ask you if there was any other way——"

"I know. Is it serious?"

"Very serious. He does not dream—I do not know yet what may come of this delay."

She paled a little. "There is danger—to you?" she questioned firmly.

Carnegie hesitated. "I do not think so," he said reassuringly. "But if I do not row over to-morrow by ten you will know something has happened." He took her hand. "My brave boy! Thank you! Now go!"

There was fire in her eyes as they met his; she wrung his hand heartily, turned, and in an instant was lost to sight in the forest.

"You tell me nothing!" Aguiras said,

folding his arms and scowling. "Yet I have a right—it is my pearl!"

Carnegie rose. "I must be off at once; there is not a moment to waste. If trouble comes it is directly due to your dilatoriness," was his curt reply.

"But why such haste? We have settled nothing. There is plenty of time. Let us wait till to-morrow, and I will plan my revenge!"

Carnegie laughed. "If you wish to help me," said he, "keep watch to-night on the château with a rifle."

"Play spy for you? Never! My country demands my blood and sinew, but not my honour, which you Americans can never understand."

Carnegie laughed again. Then with a curt "good-by" he turned back. He would waste no more time on Aguiras and his like.

The homeward row gave him a chance to think over the affair quietly. Although he had decided that he must at once put his papers into safety, yet he was unable to under-

stand the reason why they should have been the object of so elaborate an intrigue. Useful as they might have been to an enemy's navy, under the present circumstances and at the present stage in the war he could not see that they would be of the slightest value to any Spaniard. Still, misdirected energy, theatrical and futile duplicity, had characterized much of the enemy's endeavour, and it was recognisable in this. Claudia's part in it was equally incomprehensible, but he was inclined to believe that the disappearance of the pearl had driven her, from fear, to further lengths than she had planned at the first to go. Whatever the object or lack of object in the affair, he was only concerned in his own duty to his Government, which, of course, demanded proper care of its property. Since the incident of the mail robbery he had determined to intrust his reports to the sailingmaster of his yacht; and how he wished this had been done! Yet, the more he thought, the more he felt inclined to pooh-pooh any real danger, and to look upon the

placing of his papers in safety as a mere precautionary measure for self-preservation and proper attention to the etiquette of such matters. After all, the two nations were at war, and he must recognise the responsibilities of his position, however slight the real danger might seem. The whole business was futile and absurd—a great deal of mysterious intrigue for no practical good—but his duty was plain enough. “Still, I don’t understand d’Arcos!” he reflected. “Any fool would know those things were of no use! What is his game, I wonder?”

It was past five when he reached his room. A gorgeous many-coloured sunset stained the western sky, and across the court he saw the gleam of candles in the princess’s apartments. A positive loathing was in Carnegie’s heart at the thought of her deceit. A knock came at the door, and the voice of Bolislas said: “Madame la Princesse desires me to say that dinner this evening will be at seven.”

“So much the better,” thought Carnegie,

as the footfall died away. Now without delay he must get to the yacht!

The package of reports was heavy, awkward to carry. Carnegie left the room very quietly, and so went down the stair. At its foot he was confronted by Bolislas.

"Monsieur is going out?" the servant asked, in surprise.

"For a moment," Carnegie replied, moving as if to pass him, but the man did not give way.

"Monsieur will not be late for dinner? Madame—" he hesitated, but Carnegie thrust him to one side and left the house. He had not gone many yards before, glancing back, he saw the Russian watching him from the piazza. He walked on faster, and did not turn his head again, but listened, fancying he heard footsteps following him. An idea struck him, and, instead of making directly for the boat slip, he turned sharply off into the alder bushes, and crouched there in the shadow. Sure enough, in a moment the figure of Bolislas came into sight, outlined

against the brilliant sky, looked on every side, and turned back to the house. Carnegie crawled out and zigzagged cautiously down to the slip. The night was calm, so he chose a canoe and paddled off noiselessly, keeping close into the shore. Thus he rounded the peninsula and struck off toward the *Señorita*, which lay at anchor, the lights gleaming from her sides. He was aboard of her perhaps half an hour, and reappeared on deck without his package, much relieved in mind. Though the engineer was ashore on leave, yet the sailing-master assured him he would weigh anchor at dawn the following morning and take the precious package to a safe place.

The sunset had died out to a thin yellow band, and a dark sky studded with stars shone over the water as the current took Carnegie from the side of the yacht. He moved swiftly, and he was easier in mind; anything might happen now. Who cared? He would say farewell to the princess, and then go back to the yacht for the night; and, as he framed

scathing phrases in his mind, he determined it would be an interview she should not soon forget!

He beached the canoe, hiding her in the bushes on an indefinite impulse of precaution, and walked rapidly up to the house. As he entered the lighted hall he heard voices in the adjoining drawing-room. They ceased, however, with a noise of chairs being thrust back, as Carnegie closed the front door after him. He hesitated an instant, then crossed to the door and opened it without ceremony.

CHAPTER XIV.

SO DOES M. D'ARCOS.

CLAUDIA was alone in the room. She had risen and stood near the fireplace, her startled face turned toward the door. There were black hollows under her eyes, which had lost their smiling serenity, and had become restless and sombre. When she saw Carnegie she forced her pale lips into a smile.

"Why, why, Hugh!" she stammered, and then, meeting his eye, turned white and stood frozen, a breathing image of terror. Carnegie stood in the doorway, with his hands in his pockets. He had prepared himself for plain, hard dealing with this woman, in which his statement of the truth should pierce her armour of indifferentism; but he saw there was no need. She was already in the grasp

of fear, besides fully conscious of the meaning in his face.

He took a step forward into the room, and spoke in a dead-level, lifeless voice that sent a thrill as of force held in reserve along its hearer's veins. "I have come to take my leave of you. I shall spend this night on board my yacht. You understand, I think?"

Her breathing became audible, but she was not a woman to give up without a struggle. "Why, Hugh, what *are* you talking about?" she said, in a badly controlled voice that quavered on the last word.

Carnegie bent a quiet, steady glance on her. "Do you want to hear, Claudia? Is it necessary? Your face shows that you understand me perfectly, and if this is true then you can not wish me to rehearse it."

"I don't understand you!" she persisted; but her hand slid down the pole of the nearest chair to the arm, and clung there convulsively.

His voice rose a little and rang out hard.

“Had you no feeling of honour, Claudia, to restrain you?”

“How dare you—” said she, but her voice trailed off into inarticulate protest, and she clung to the chair with bent head. There was a dreadful attentiveness in her face.

Carnegie looked all around the room, the beautiful room, with its blue and white walls, the shining silver lamps and candles, the pictures and the china. It gave him an incredulous sensation, and when he spoke his voice had momentarily softened. “I can not tell you the shock this has been to me,” said he; “that you, my cousin, my friend, should have played such a part during these last ten days, and for pure greed! I might have thought that our friendship would have checked you—if not any sentiment of patriotism—” This last word seemed to spur her to an instant’s self-possession.

“Really, Hugh!” said she flippantly, “you are too absurd. If you must preach, do choose a better text.”

He remained silent, and she took courage.

“Of course you are annoyed!” she remarked shrilly. “Of course! No one likes to be played upon. But do drop your romantics. A man of the world—what does it amount to?”

“Let me congratulate you,” said Carnegie smoothly, stung by these words to pitilessness, “on the way you have upheld your dignity! How delighted the society journals will be to get the story—how the Princess Sarrazine was a liar and a thief!”

“Take care, Hugh!” she broke out. “You would never dare!”

“If I had my way I would let every honest creature know the truth about you! I would tell them how you sold your sense of honour, and how you vilely set to work to compromise mine; how you used the lowest arts and flattery, such as a poor wretch on the street would not have stooped to—lies, and lying affection, and lying interest!” He was desperately angry, with the blind rage one feels against an insensate object, and he did not mince words. She should feel his con-

tempt, with her slow, cold nature, if she felt nothing else in life. And she did feel it, for she winced and threw out an imploring hand.

"It was not that, not that! You don't understand! Listen!" she cried, to beat down his words; but when he paused with pointed attention she was silent. Carnegie smiled—a smile that was like a blow.

"A proof of my friendship," he quoted slowly; "just a proof which you would value—which I should not regret! And you stood here, and laid your hand on my arm, and looked up at my face, and all that time—pah!" He shuddered with disgust.

"Oh, but you are cruel—you won't believe me—it wasn't—" She came toward him imploringly. "Hugh, I meant it—I meant it——"

A shout of scornful laughter from Carnegie checked these words, and seemed to be more than she could bear. She shrank back, and crossed the room hurriedly to the bell. He stood looking at her, still shaken by paroxysms of bitter mirth, when his arms

were suddenly pinioned from behind. Carnegie turned furiously on his assailants, but there were four of them, and in a moment they had him helpless. At this instant the door into an inner room opened, and M. Jacoby, in evening dress, sauntered smilingly forward.

“ Ah, my dear Carnegie! ” said he, looking composedly from one to the other of the group. “ It is not possible I heard a discussion? ”

The attack had the effect of suddenly cooling and restringing every fibre in Carnegie’s body. The interests involved and the real danger in which he found himself, steadied his nerves and gave him self-control. He bit his lip, looked at Jacoby, and said nothing.

“ Well, well! ” said that individual, or M. d’Arcos, to give him his right name; “ what a pity! ” He put his head on one side like some malevolent bird, and a pause followed his words. The princess was the first to break it. She went up to d’Arcos with uncertain steps.

“ You will not hurt him—promise me!” she asked.

“ Not yet awhile!” d’Arcos reassured her, and she bent her head in acceptance of this assurance and left the room. In the silence that followed her departure the tap of her feet on the floor and the swish of her gown were perfectly audible, as she went laboriously upstairs. Carnegie stood quietly; already he was beginning mentally to run over the situation, and to outweigh his chances.

“ You Americans are in such a hurry!” said M. d’Arcos, seating himself comfortably in the chair the princess had occupied. “ You have had things all your own way for some time—now it is our turn! Did you find the papers in his trunk?” he inquired of one of Carnegie’s captors. The man—it was one of the footmen—replied in French that no papers were to be found.

“ Ah! then they will be on board the yacht—it is just the same!” said M. d’Arcos. “ We will wait! Let me warn you,”

he addressed Carnegie, "that if you struggle or attempt to escape you will be shot like a pig!"

Carnegie bowed.

"I am glad," said M. d'Arcos politely, "to find you so sensible!"

A silence of perhaps ten minutes followed, during which Carnegie speculated on the yacht's chances, and was not encouraged. He stood passively between the four men, his wrists bound together with cord. M. d'Arcos whiled away the time by reading in a little French book, the pages of which seemed to afford him amusement.

By and by there was a distant noise of doors opening, and of voices drawing nearer. Carnegie's heart beat high; M. d'Arcos turned a page. He looked up, however, as two men entered the room. "Eh bien?" said he.

The man told him in French that the Señorita had been successfully surprised. A sunny smile broke upon the face of M. d'Arcos, who glanced at the prisoner during this

information. Carnegie had expected it, and not a muscle of his face twitched.

“This is very satisfactory!” said d’Arcos. “You are sure the rowboats are secured? Good! You can take him away!” And he returned to his amusing book. Carnegie was marched off, wondering where he was to be taken. He was not long left in doubt. There was a little room or closet in the old wing, at the head of the cellar stair. It was used for stores, and had a small barred window looking upon the court. Here they brought Carnegie, pushed him down upon the floor beside a jug of water, and, with an ostentatious jingle of keys, left him to his own devices. The place was perfectly dark, though a star or two shone through the tiny pane.

It is astonishing how soon one becomes used to extraordinary circumstances. When he had a moment to think it over, Carnegie was surprised at his own equanimity. “It all seems quite natural!” he soliloquized. “Yet it is the year of our Lord 1898!” He

was stiff and tired, but not especially cast down. He had great belief in himself, and small respect for his enemies. Nevertheless, it was certain that nothing could be done that night, and he sensibly resolved to try to sleep. He crawled over to the water pitcher, drank deep, and then stretched himself out on the floor; but sleep was long in coming. Late into the night he heard talking and laughing and singing; footsteps passed and repassed his door on their way to the wine cellar. After a long time, however, he was swept away in dreams that he and Tatiana were fleeing from the princess in a canoe through endless arcades of tropical forest.

He awoke at dawn. A great noise was going on above his head, the clatter of feet, the moving of heavy objects, and voices, now hurried, now sharp in command. Then it all ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and the château was silent as usual. The patch of sky visible from his window brightened and warmed and grew luminous, and a sun-

beam fell aslant the courtyard. Carnegie sat up, and tried to reason it all out. The house remained absolutely still, without a sound of life coming to his ears. Evidently the Spaniards had taken possession of the Señorita, and the hasty voices at dawn signified their embarkation. This was bad; but, on the other hand, Tatiana would be on the look-out ready to give the alarm if he did not turn up as expected. Barstow and his steam yacht were on their way to the Château Gui, and there was the chance that some of the Señorita's seamen might have escaped. Carnegie was as far as ever from understanding what use d'Arcos could possibly make of the yacht and the papers he had seized. The papers were useless, save to a navy, and the Señorita was not fitted for a long voyage, he repeated incredulously to himself, "But it's perfectly futile! It's silly! It's damned nonsense! They can't use them—it's a bad dream. When will I wake up?" with more annoyance than anger or alarm. There must be some method of escape. He could not

free his hands, and in the effort had only rubbed the wrists raw and bleeding.

He turned his attention to his prison. The window, barred to keep people out, was entirely effective for the purpose of keeping him in; and, even if it had not been so, the court outside was a trap. He ran his eye along the rows of shelves covered with bottles and cans, and as he did so a memory flashed across his mind of his long-ago visit to the Château Gui. This closet then had been bare and empty, and surely, if his recollection served him, it had been the original pantry of the house before the new wing was built, and there had been a square hole in the wall for the purpose of passing dishes from the kitchen. This aperture he clearly remembered, and, although the cans and jars piled on the shelves totally hid the white-washed wall, yet he was sure of the place. With a ray of hope he turned his back to the shelves, and painfully, using his tied fists, began to move the jars aside piece by piece. It occurred to him that this closet had prob-

ably been stocked before the princess's arrival, and that therefore she might well be ignorant of any such opening. He had just begun this task when he heard steps in the passage outside, and he instantly flung himself on the floor again. The key turned, the door opened, and Claudia, bearing a tray, stood before him. Evidently she had not been to bed, for she wore the same gorgeous dress of the night before, embroidered gray satin and pearls at her throat. Her face was jaded and her eyes were red. She stopped uncertainly in the doorway.

"I have saved your life, Hugh!" said she, almost in a whisper. He made no answer.

"If you promise not to try to escape you may come out." Still he kept silence.

"Won't you speak to me?"

"There is nothing to say!"

"I begged your life—isn't that a little? You shall not be touched, war or no war."

To this he answered "Thank you" dryly enough, and she sighed heavily.

“Here is your breakfast.” She set down the tray. “I will untie your hands so you can eat it.”

He held them out to her in silence, and she undid the knots. Carnegie was hungry and ate heartily. The irony of the dainty tray, with its napkin and silver and porcelain, to say nothing of the food itself, made him smile.

“It is more like an invalid’s fare than a prisoner’s!” he remarked.

“I didn’t want you to be starved.”

Carnegie wondered how his jailers came to permit this sort of thing, which was certainly not *en règle*. “I don’t think you realize,” said he, “what an absurd and unnecessary affair you are mixed up in—futile and theatrical to the last degree. You have sacrificed a great deal, princess, to allow your friend d’Arcos a sight of papers which will not do him the least particle of good.”

“Will you give me your parole?” she asked him piteously again; and in reply he turned his hands to her to be retied.

The princess's fingers trembled and were cold as they touched his, and she gave a little exclamation in undertone at sight of his raw wrists. To ease him she slipped the rope down to tie it in a fresh place, and he smiled a little to himself as he felt her do this. Then he heard the door shut, the key turn, and the footsteps die away.

It took him just one minute to free his hands from Claudia's fetters. He found a bottle of sweet oil, and, breaking off the neck, rubbed his wrists with the contents. Then he flew like a tiger at the long rows of cans.

CHAPTER XV.

A HUNDRED YARDS DASH.

CARNEGIE counted upon an hour or two of solitude, but he did not intend to be caught unawares. He took off his coat and hung it over the keyhole, and he also half closed the shutters of the little window. Then he set to work, and in a very few minutes had laid bare a portion of the white-washed wall behind the stores, only, it is true, to meet with disappointment. Could he have been mistaken? Or had he merely set to work upon the wrong shelf? Full of this doubt he recommenced operations on the next shelf below, for he realized that instinctively he had begun somewhat high up. At first he seemed doomed again to failure, but a second glance reassured him, and set his heart beating with hope. The surface of

the wall was whitewashed here as it was above, but running his hand along it he felt the outline of a board. Pushing the tins to right and left, Carnegie exposed first one end of this board, and then the other. Its size and shape left no doubt that it covered the hole he remembered, but now the question arose whether or not it was nailed to the wall. This he solved speedily, to his great satisfaction, by slipping his fingers behind it. As he hoped, it merely held its place by the piled cans, and when he pushed these aside the slab fell of its own accord. A rush of cold, musty air met his nostrils from the square hole. Carnegie paused to listen, but no sound greeted his ears; the way was unimpeded. Cautiously, very cautiously, he approached the opening and peered through it. He looked into the deserted kitchen of the house, now turned into a sort of outhouse, the receptacle for kindling wood, packing boxes, crates, and barrels. The windows, heavily shuttered, let only one thin slit of sunlight cut the darkness like the blade of

a knife, that heightened the duskiness of the corners. Dust lay everywhere, and a further evidence of disuse were the festoons of spiders' webs. One big fly filled the place with frantic buzzing.

The square hole looked very small, but the prisoner did not hesitate. He laid his coat on the shelf nearby, so that he could reach it easily from the other side, put his feet out first, and drew himself through the aperture. It was a tight fit, but careful wriggling, one arm at a time, did it, and he stood free upon the kitchen floor. "Well!" he thought, with a long breath of relief, "that's a good beginning."

He put on his coat, and proceeded to cover his tracks by rearranging the cans through the hole in such a manner as to hide it again. The square slab lay upon the closet floor, but in itself was not an object of suspicion, and Carnegie worked at the cans until he was satisfied that they covered the hole. At the last moment a chance noise gave him a fright, and he darted across the floor to a

place where he knew there was a trapdoor into the cellar. Certainly his familiarity with the Château Gui stood him in good stead.

The trap was there, sure enough, and easily pulled open, but there were no stairs—the steps he counted upon had been taken away. The cellar under the old wing was completely dark, and to save his life Carnegie could not recollect if the floor beneath were seven feet down or seventeen. Still, he was tuned to action now, his blood was up, there was that excitement dancing in his veins which carries a man over obstacles with an impetus like a horse at a gate. Carnegie did not let himself pause to think of chances or broken limbs. He let himself slowly down into the black pit by his hands, hung for an instant with waving legs, took the moment with set teeth, straightened his body for the shock of a six-foot fall, let go, and dropped perhaps twelve inches! A man who has found himself swimming for his life in five feet of water knows Carnegie's sensations. But he had no time to laugh or gasp; around the

corner was the wine cellar, through which he must pass to reach liberty. Here a broad flight of steps, well lighted from above, led into the darkness of the cellar, and, to add to the risk of his position, voices were plainly heard in the pantry at the head of the stairs. Holding his breath and listening with a flying heart, he doubled up and sped across this space of danger, only to whisk behind a keg as a clatter of heels and snatch of song descended the stair. Crouched there, he dreaded the very sound of his breathing, as he heard the servant pass within a foot of him. "Bolislas, hé—Bolislas!" The man had paused, and seemed to shout into Carnegie's very ears. "Is there not a bottle of the Tokay for madame's déjeuner?"

Bolislas replied from the pantry above:

"The last bottle went with monsieur on the yacht this morning."

"Monsieur is in luck!" the footman grumbled. "It must be claret, then, I suppose!"

He selected a bottle, and then Carnegie

heard the retreating footfall, followed by the bang of the cellar door, which left him in grateful darkness.

His objective point was that part of the cellar which, being under the new wing, was furnished with windows above ground. To reach this in total darkness was not easy, and although he fixed the points of the compass well in his mind Carnegie was continually checked and confused by stumbling upon alcoves, pantry walls, chimneys, which lay in his path. He was obliged to grope his way without noise, and therefore slowly, although he was tormented with haste and fear lest his flight should have been discovered. Patience and coolness accomplished it after what seemed a perilous time (it was perhaps twenty minutes), and at length he stood in the light portion of the cellar. Eagerly he scanned the row of windows, and chose that one which was darkened by a bush of flowering shrub. This formed a little spot of shelter which might aid his flight—the only one, by the way, on which he could count, for

the windows looked upon the bay side of the peninsula, where the lawn was wide and treeless.

The window was a simple casement, opened by hook and latchet, and Carnegie climbed out of it into the spot of shade made by the bush and crouched there breathless, the fresh air on his cheek. His eyes, accustomed to the gloom of the cellar, saw the sunlit lawn before him in a brilliant purple, depressingly clear. Not an inch to hide anywhere on that open stretch of grass which he must cross to the sea! And if they should have found the canoe—but he must not think. He gathered himself up, sprang out into the open, set his face to the sea, and ran.

A window thrown up behind him, an exclamation in Spanish, followed by the “crack, crack!” of a revolver, greeted his start in the race. Carnegie’s heart went down, but he ran as he had never run on the cinder path the day he won a college championship. The shots were followed by others—so near! He wondered if he were

hit, and in the flash of his running had some thought of Spanish marksmanship, and ran on faster. He thought he heard a woman's scream, but far away in comparison with the shots. Then in a pause came other sounds—calling and noise in the house—and the “pad, pad, pad” of feet behind him—swift as the wind. He glanced over his shoulder, to see two men following at full speed, but one was already flagging and falling back, while the other, a young fellow, was rapidly coming up. Carnegie saw at once that this man would overtake him, and also that he was unarmed. The other man, confident of his companion's pace, paused to reload his pistol.

Carnegie slackened his speed, as if fatigued; the Spaniard came on fiercely. Then Carnegie checked, made a twist aside, and turned upon the fellow, head down, like a bull. He struck him fairly with his whole weight, and knocked him breathless. He was off again for his life, and now the alder bushes were near—the sound of waves on the rocks came to his ears. Suddenly he heard other

pursuing footfalls, and heard them with despair, for he was almost spent. He looked, and saw (with what sensations!) Tatiana flying toward him along the edge of the alder bushes, waving her cap and calling his name. Shots rang out from the house, and—ah, God! she was hit, she stumbled—a cold mist clouded his eyes. Then the scene came out again in its bright distinctness, she came toward him swiftly as before, and he had a strange sensation that he had been running for hours. The shock had not helped his speed; he was pumping his breath in gasps. Now she was near him, pale with fear, and crying out: “The boat, the boat! My boat!”

He could not answer. He swerved with her and jumped into the hedge, a side glance of his eye showing him the lawn dotted, but some distance back, with pursuing figures.

The boat bobbed at the ledge of rock, fastened to a stone. Those last few yards on the boulders seemed to Carnegie, panting, desperate, like the dreadful balked hurry of a dream. They reached the ledge, and his

blood cooled; he was counting the seconds till the hedge should swarm with enemies. Would the painter never come untied? The fraction of time wherein the wet rope was rebellious seemed like an hour to him. The boat was loosed, they flung themselves upon the thwarts, pushed off, and bent to the long sweep of the oars. They could see nothing of the lawn; the alders hid it with their twinkling silver leaves. Two, four, six, hard, steady strokes before the foremost pursuer burst from the bushes, and a jet of water a foot from the boat marked his bullet. By the time the others came up the boat was out in the bay, moving up and down with the waves, a poor target for such marksmen. After a few more ineffectual shots the group of men dispersed toward the house. Carnegie had been afraid that they might be pursued with another rowboat; but for some purpose of his own M. d'Arcos had all the rowboats drawn up high upon the shore and the oars locked up. At the time, of course, Carnegie did not know of this, and was some-

what surprised at this abandonment of the pursuit. He spoke of it when they were well away.

“Why don’t they follow—they have boats?”

Tatiana slackened speed, and glanced at her blistered palms. “Perhaps,” she suggested, “they have orders not to leave the peninsula.”

“True; he may not trust them. It’s the most incomprehensible business to me—the whole of it!”

“I don’t understand yet. May I hear?”

He noticed that her face was pale. “This will be too much for you!” he said, with concern, and insisted that she should let him do the rest of the rowing alone. They landed, hid the boat, and when they had started to walk up the path to The Lodges he told her the whole story. After he ended there came a pause, during which he looked at her. “If it hadn’t been for you I should have been shot. There would never have been time to launch the canoe. How did you know?”

"When you didn't come at ten o'clock," said Tatiana, "I took my boat and landed, spying about. First I thought you had left on the yacht, as she was gone. Then I noticed strange men, and heard Spanish spoken, and I began to fear for you. I was just about to go back and raise an alarm, when I heard shots and saw you running across the lawn."

"And Aguiras never offered to help you?"

Tatiana smiled. "He was writing letters and plotting revenge."

"He let you come alone?" Carnegie cried furiously.

She looked up with a flush. "But, you see, he does not know!" said she apologetically.

"He had no business—" Carnegie began; then, with a change of voice, "You know I haven't words to thank you, but if you knew——"

"I was very glad to do it," she interrupted simply, and looked away for an instant. "I think," she added, "you are

one of the best friends I have in the world."

He waited till she turned her eyes back again, and each searched the other's face in silence.

"I wish I could be sure of that," said Carnegie, in an uncertain voice, and then checked himself. He had just noticed how worn out the girl looked. "You are very tired, mademoiselle?"

"Awfully!" she said; then, with a laugh: "Do you suppose it is twelve o'clock or four? I've no idea, but it seems to me that I breakfasted a week ago."

"Take my arm!" said Carnegie. "I fear I've nothing, not even a flask."

"Oh, but that's nonsense!" She glanced down at her clothes.

"Do as I tell you, Peter," he insisted, "or I shall carry you pick-a-back!"

It seemed a long, long climb to The Lodges, and it was well into the afternoon before they reached there. Dora was on the lookout for Tatiana, and apparently had heard

enough of the story not to be dumfounded at the sight of Carnegie. When the man and girl came into the tiny hut, fresh and fragrant with balsam, and saw set out on the table a loaf of brown bread, butter and a golden cheese, a big pitcher of milk, and a lighted chafing dish where slices of mutton were sizzling in a delicious aroma of wine and currant jelly, they made Dora laugh by their exclamations.

“But I want to hear!” she cried. “I am wild with curiosity! What does it mean? Look at Mr. Carnegie’s coat—covered with straw! And, oh, Ta—Peter! If you could see your face!”

“Have to wait!” said Tatiana briefly, and fell upon the loaf with a knife. Carnegie seized the milk pitcher.

“Mr. Carnegie, won’t you tell me?”

“Some day! Oh, that mutton!”

Dora gave up her questions, and set herself to satisfying their appetites. She was rewarded afterward by hearing the tale at length, during which, by the way, Carnegie’s

knowledge of Tatiana's identity came out so naturally that it caused no shock or embarrassment to any one of the three. Dora Brent was a sensible, womanly little creature or she would not have been the friend of Tatiana Sarrazine, and she forbore, by word or glance, to add to the constraint of the situation. She saw, and she smiled once or twice—a little sadly, perhaps, but not a jest or rallying allusion came to her lips.

There was a telegram for Carnegie in Dora's care, and he was delighted to find that it told him of Barstow's departure in the *Nereid* for the Château Gui. He made a rapid calculation, decided that she was due at Shattogie Point by noon of the following day, and determined to go down to the village, hire a sailboat, lie to somewhere in the path of the *Nereid* and intercept her. With an unknown face in possession, it would not be safe to bring Barstow and his yacht to the pier. Moreover, all Carnegie's ideas and thoughts had become fused into

one determination, which was to recapture the Señorita and recover his stolen papers.

All during that afternoon the three sat within the hut discussing the affair. Viewed now from a comparative distance, it presented endless avenues of speculation. "What is it all about, anyway?" Carnegie demanded. "What is it for? Where has d'Arcos taken my yacht? If only some one could answer these questions!"

"We could raise the neighbourhood," suggested Dora, "and make a hue and cry in no time. The fishermen and farmers would only welcome the chance."

Carnegie dissented. "No, no," said he; "that would let every one know my reports are gone, and I mean to get them back." This was not his only motive to avoid an émeute, but he was a trifle ashamed of the other. "If this were Cuba now it would seem right and natural. But in this little corner of New England, out of the way of the world, to be infested as it were with a spo-

radic outbreak of the war fever—it is extraordinary!”

“You don’t think the Spaniards can get here?” Dora asked, to whom this unpleasant idea occurred for the first time.

“By no means! The path is not easy to hit, and they are unlikely to go exploring.” Carnegie reassured her.

“I wish I had found out more from Bolislás,” Tatiana said meditatively, her chin upon her hands. “Dear old Bolislás would have told me anything!”

“He knew you?” Carnegie asked, in surprise.

“Of course,” she rejoined. “He used to be my groom at Varsovie before *she* came. He taught me to ride. He has been very much upset by my hiding, and over and over again has tried to persuade me to go to *her*.” She paused, glancing across at Dora.

Carnegie’s face had clouded at mention of the princess, and his mouth involuntarily set into hard lines as he sat silent. He won-

dered what were Claudia Sarrazine's thoughts at that instant.

"Where's Aguiras?" he said abruptly, suddenly remembering.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," Dora cried eagerly. "He has gone! He left this morning—in the service of his country, so he told me."

"He's fortunate," remarked Carnegie grimly; and they began to talk of something else.

The size of their dwelling had obliged the two girls to offer their guest the lean-to for the night. This Carnegie thankfully accepted, and as he was weary, and had to make an early start next morning, he soon excused himself. Fresh balsam boughs filled the lean-to, and made a springy mattress. At his feet was the camp fire, which he replenished with billets of wood. Here came Tatiana, bringing him a pillow and thick blanket, and, best of all, her hand and glance for good night. Then she left him, and he rolled up in his blanket and

threw himself down. But, for all his fatigue, he lay awake for some time, staring at the studded sky, the belt of dark forest trees, the smoke rising fantastically from the burning logs. Wandering night odours came to him deliciously ; he would hear a snatch of song from another camp fire farther up the hillside, and wonder if all were not a dream. What a contrast was this rest in the open to his luxurious room in the Château Gui! Tired, perplexed, weary as he was, he had never before been conscious of so active, so exultant a sense of happiness. She would be within a few yards of him all night, and they looked upon the same prospect. Carnegie smiled, drowsily and happily, to himself like a child, turned over, and drifted off into slumber. Once or twice in the night he awoke, and always with the same sequence of impressions: first, the unfamiliarity of his surroundings, the brilliant skies, the trees moving and sighing in the wind, the fragrance and warmth of his resting place; then the red eye of the camp

fire, unwinking and watchful, and last the remembrance that she was so near—a remembrance the delight of which would bear him off again to deeper slumber than before.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE NEREID.

TATIANA herself roused him in the early morning to partake of the breakfast which she had prepared. She had brought it outside lest Dora should be waked, and they sat over the fire in the sharp air and ate it, talking in whispers. The little settlement lay like an enchanted village, or one of fairies or gnomes. Here and there a fire still smoked, but the closed windows of the tiny low-roofed huts gave them an air of sleepy hobgoblins with hats pulled down upon their brows. Below, in the valley, long ragged veils of mist curled and twisted, a mock sea hiding the real. The sky was clear, the quarter of the dawn visibly brightening, and glittering with a great star above the horizon. The wind blew westward along the mountain, till the

piners hummed. Much as he delighted in all these things, Carnegie's eyes, dwelling on them, came back to hers as if for sympathy each time before going afield again.

The girl's face was a little pale and tired, but he had never seen it so clearly marked with the beauty of expression. Her eyes were thoughtful, yet full of sensibility, lightening involuntarily to the light in his. She moved with less sprightliness, quieter than usual in her boy's dress, with an older look, like one bent on action. A spirit of determination seemed to guide her, and she moved gravely obedient. Quick to feel her changes of mood, Carnegie was made anxious by her gravity, as though it portended him no good and ought to be dispelled. In the silence of their walk down the mountain his eyes rested upon her figure, fascinated by its astonishing grace and lightness, its freedom, which made the disguise so good, the proud carriage of the head, the picturesqueness of the dress itself, which, when he came to look closely at it, was such as an artist, but not

every lad, might have worn. She seemed to catch some of these thoughts, and glanced up with a smile.

"You are looking at Peter," she cried; "it is his last appearance. He consents to go with you only this once."

"Is that irrevocable? I hope not."

"Yes, it is," she answered firmly.

"Won't your friends at The Lodges be rather surprised?"

"Perhaps. Most of them are our friends, and know it. The strangers—well, it does not matter so much in our world," she added; and then, hesitating, as if to express herself exactly: "I am not so ashamed of Peter as many good people would think I ought to be. The masquerade, of course, I dislike, and it is silly and unbecoming. But the freedom and health I have had through it—why, I am another creature. After last winter's work it has made me feel like a dryad—a faun, a part of the earth and forest, if you understand me."

Carnegie nodded.

It was this quality which had taken all self-consciousness, all theatricality, from her unconventional act, and lent it a sort of rustic dignity. She had worn her boy's dress, not to play the woman in it, but, like Rosalind, to take refuge in Arden with the spirit of frolic, and a young joy in the freedom. That he had appeared upon the scene and changed this spirit had been his doing, not hers.

"I hope you will change your mind," said he. "I don't want to lose my friend Peter."

"You will have your friend Tatiana." She coloured a little, and went on hurriedly: "But you have not yet told me what you mean to do after we meet Mr. Barstow's yacht."

"If he has done as I told him, there will be firearms aboard, and I mean to hunt down the Señorita and get back my papers. That is my first thought. The Nereid is a larger boat and very fast. But if there is any mistake, I suppose I shall have to put the affair into Government hands, which for many reasons I do not wish to do."

"On the princess's account?" hazarded Tatiana.

"And on my own. I am responsible, remember, for these reports."

"Mr. Carnegie, was much of this affair due to her?"

He replied "Yes," and by the wrinkle of pain between his brows Tatiana guessed how much. She remained silent, and after a little Carnegie said: "Some day you shall hear all, but not now. There is no one to whom I had rather tell it."

They walked on.

"You must tell me what to do while you are gone," said the girl at length.

"Keep out of harm's way. I must not be anxious about you, too. Promise me!" He spoke earnestly, but Tatiana smiled.

"I am not going to get hurt, I promise that. But some one must keep watch on the Château Gui and the princess. Who knows what might happen?"

"That," said Carnegie, "I leave to your discretion. If it will not trouble you too

much, the telegraph office ought to be watched. A wire in my name will bring troops from the nearest camp, and you must send it unless everything seems quiet at the château, as I think it will. After all, they have accomplished their end."

"I will keep on the lookout, then."

"And your sketching?" he volunteered, with a hope that it would turn her from this idea—a hope which, by the way, was personal, as he knew of no one else to do the work.

"Oh, my poor sketching!" She threw up her hands. "I shall have no picture in next winter's exhibition, and Dora and I will starve. By the way, do you still wish to send me to 'Smith'?" Her face and eyes were mischievous, and they both laughed.

"I think you're just right. I wouldn't change you!" said Carnegie fervently, to which Tatiana replied, with a shrug:

"Ah, you differ from my relatives!"

"By the way, have you relatives, *mademoiselle*?"

“Certainly, in England—uncles, aunts, cousins, bushels of them!”

“Then, may I ask, why did you not go to them instead of coming to America?”

She paused, regarding him, with fun in her eyes.

“Because—well, to go to one’s uncle is not to run away! And I know what would happen. They would not let me paint—except my cheeks—and they would present me—*me*—with a long train of satin, and feathers in my hair like an Indian squaw! I decided to be an Indian brave instead. You need not look shocked, monsieur; my good relatives know nothing. They think I travel somewhere with my governess!”

Carnegie thought of Sir George and Lady Greville, and began to laugh. Suddenly he checked himself. “But there must be a title!” he cried involuntarily.

“Ah, *mais!* But of course there is a title. Princess, if you like! What good is that?” And she made him a mock reverence.

He caught her eye, and they two were

very merry, until an idea struck the young man.

“By the way, I insist on one thing, *mademoiselle*——”

“Ah, insist!” cried she, in a tone of comical defiance.

“If you stay here you must have a pistol. Where can I get you one?”

“A *revolvair*? Do you think I go unarmed into the enemy’s camp?” said she very composedly, and drew a small Smith & Wesson from the pocket of her jacket.

“But can you shoot?” he asked, incredulous.

“What a question! Of course I can! Look, I will hit that bough!” She was as good as her word, and convinced him very soon of her ability to handle the weapon well enough for self-defence. This relieved his mind immensely, and pleased him, as another instance of her self-reliance.

“You can look after yourself!” he cried.

“You see, I had to!” was her reply; then, meeting his eyes, smiled back into them. All

during the walk their eyes continually met and held each other's, parting to meet again with the same pleasure.

The village was wide awake by the time they reached it, and they were not long in finding a boat and man. They set out with taut sails, in a roaring wind. The sunlight struck the crests of the short waves, glistening and tumbling, the spray flew and splashed Tatiana till her short brown curls were wet. They sat together, and at the wave's assault blinked and shivered and laughed for pure joy. If anything could rouse the spirit of adventure it was this swift flight, this plunge and tug, the bowsprit going under and the boat's timbers quivering. They tacked and began to run before the wind, racing the green rollers that came in from the sea. The errand was forgotten in the exhilaration of this motion and companionship, and as he sat sheltered under a heap of oilskins Carnegie's blood ran fast.

It took them a couple of hours, of this windy flight, to reach the place where Car-

negie had expected to lie to and wait for Barstow's yacht. But it chanced that as they came up into the eye of the wind Tatiana called out, "That big white boat, is it she?"

And on came the Nereid, stately in white paint and dazzling brasses, disdaining to wet her deck with the waves which drenched the little sailboat. With one accord all three waved their caps and shouted, fearing she might pass them unawares, for she was making excellent time.

"There's Barstow!" cried Carnegie. "He's got a glass—he'll see us! Hi! Hi!

"I see him," said Tatiana, and a note in her voice made him turn to look at her.

"You're tired," said he remorsefully. "You've done too much, yesterday and to-day too, confound it all! Why didn't you tell me?"

She shook her head, looking toward the Nereid, which had begun to slow down and churn the water.

"It looks so big—and comfortable—"

She tried to laugh. "You won't come back!"

"Won't I? Wait and see!" They leaned upon the gunwale side by side, watching the yacht, and Carnegie spoke in a low voice. "You don't mean that?"

"Yes, I think I do." Her gaze was fixed on the gig being lowered so fast, so fast, from the side of the big yacht.

"You will go off with your friend, and find that much pleasanter than——" She stopped, and laughed unreasonably.

"I'm coming back the very first moment I can, if I may," said he hurriedly, for the gig was nearing, "and to stay at The Lodges. May I?"

"The princess won't like that!"

"It's for you to say, not for her. Damn those fellows, why are they in such a hurry! May I come?"

"You can go anywhere you like."

"That's not what I mean. Would you like it? Tell me quickly!"

The gig rose on a wave and dipped be-

hind it. Tatiana turned her eyes from it to his eyes with a flash, clear, intense, fathoms deep with meaning, and gave a little swift nod of her head. The glance seemed to engulf him, to close above his head, he had such a sensation of plunge and tumult. The swift words had passed in a breath, like flame breaking from a smouldering log. There was no time for the interchange of another word. Her hand tingled in his for one second, then the gig drew up and he jumped aboard. The gig pushed off again and bobbed up and down, the wet oars flashing, until it reached the side of the Nereid.

The sailboat tacked and came by under the yacht's stern; Tatiana could make out Carnegie's figure on the deck, talking animatedly to a couple of men. Then an order was given, a bell rang, the yacht described a circle, and moved slowly off westward whence she had come. The swell tossed the sailboat, and Tatiana could not make out, for all her staring, if that was a handkerchief waved from the stern or not. The Nereid disappeared

behind the point, and once again reappeared for an instant as a white, glancing speck. The boom swung over the girl's head and creaked, and they set the prow for home. Tatiana resumed her place; and, although no spray flew on the way, yet there was a drop or two of salt water on her cheeks.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRINCESS FINDS HER PEARL.

FOR several succeeding days Tatiana watched the Château Gui. It was tiring work, but had for her a double advantage; it enabled her to think in quiet over many troublesome questions, and also seemed to help Carnegie. She took her luncheon, landed in a sheltered part of the peninsula, and made a nook for herself among the alder bushes, whence she could command a view of the house. Here she was herself quite hidden in the green and white branches, yet could see everything which took place. The hedge was fringed on the landward side with stumpy bushes of ground pine, huckleberry clumps, and fragrant sweet fern, in which she sat buried. She had books and her sketch-book, but she read little; her time went in

dreaming, with her eyes fixed upon the gray house. Little happened during her vigil. Now Bolislas, now François, or the cook would pass to and from the farm, or one of the strange men would wander about the kitchen garden. Several times Miss Vesey went hurrying by, her little white shawl over her shoulders. Late one afternoon a tall figure came out upon the lawn, strolled a listless step or two in the garden path, and turned back again into the house. This glimpse of the princess set the girl thinking, and all that twilight, for she watched until the stars came out, her mind was busy with a problem. On the solitary homeward row, the climb through the woods up to The Lodges with Dora, who always came down to the shore to meet her, she was still weighing and measuring and pondering. Up to the last few weeks it could truthfully be said that Tatiana had never felt the disadvantage of her escapade. She had enjoyed to the full the liberty, the artist life, and the absorption of her occupation, and had not been made to

feel any of the difficulties of her curious position. But the past fortnight had changed all; that had come into her life which could not be effaced, but which altered the future and set new significance upon the past. In addition to this personal problem, an absorbing one to every woman, there was yet one more pressing and difficult, upon which her peace of mind depended. She would never have believed that a question of mere right and wrong could be so delicate, or honest justice so great an art as it appeared. Here her youth, her loneliness, her inexperience, became painfully apparent to her mind; never had she felt so utterly forlorn or without guardianship, and the thought of her dear governess would come aching back to her. The worst of it lay in the fact that she was conscious the experience had shaken her nerve; it had opened her eyes. She could not look forward to the future so gladly confident as before; it seemed no longer simple and strenuous, but complex and full of pitfalls. She began

to dread it, to doubt her capacity to meet it, and, although not in any sense regretting her lost existence, yet she could not help repenting her precipitancy, and wishing she had not burned all her boats behind her. These thoughts and difficulties, however, could not keep her long awake after a day in the open woods, but they recurred with her awakening, and seemed wearily far from solution.

There came a morning, three days after Carnegie's departure, when her watch was not without result. About noon an old battered fishing schooner crept into the harbour, and Tatiana saw three or four men leave the Château Gui and board her. They were all foreigners and carried bundles, and soon after their embarkation the battered old schooner shook her sails out and crawled slowly down to sea.

The day passed; it became evident the Spaniards had finally departed. The sunset came dull and ruddy, hinting a rainy morrow. Tatiana saw it, and felt the cooler air with pleasure; it had been uncomfortably

warm even in the shade of her hiding place. There had been little sign of life about the house since the departure of the men, but now the princess came out again and strolled about, stepping daintily. Just as the sight of her figure a day back had conjured Tatiana's problem, so to-day as suddenly it clinched her determination. Right or wrong, she decided what she was going to do; and in this decision seemed to shut the lid of her mind and stamp on it with a firm heel. She took a hasty survey of herself. True to her assertion to Carnegie she was in girl's dress, although scarcely less rough than Peter's. Her brown hair had grown almost long again; she smoothed it with her hands. Then she waited.

The princess came slowly toward her, listlessly, as one who walks without relish, her eyes fixed on some point ahead and taking little heed of anything. The gauzy white dress she wore, as usual richly trimmed, seemed to accentuate the haggard pallor of her face, to which the last week had added

ten years. At sight of it, stamped with tragedy, Tatiana felt a sort of pity, remembering it serenely indifferent. "Oh, she looks very badly!" she thought, horrified. Then, as the princess drew nearer, Tatiana saw that the hand hanging by her side glowed with gems of splendid colours; the pity left the girl's face, and it hardened. Still she did not change her mind as the princess came steadily on along the edge of the alder bushes.

"Will Madame la Princesse grant me one word?"

The voice came clear and low out of the thick bush at Claudia's right hand. She gave a violent start, and stood still, pressing her hand to her heart, her eyes a little wild.

"I beg madame's pardon; I did not mean to startle her," said Tatiana, and parted the bushes so the princess could see in. Claudia looked, saw only a young girl up to her knees in the ground pine, her slim brown hands holding the branches aside to right and left.

"I am very foolish, but my nerves—" she murmured, trying for a smile. She looked

at the girl more carefully—a handsome girl, superbly built, and glowing with youth and health. Her features, large and generously cut, were dominated by a pair of extraordinarily brilliant and intelligent brown eyes. Rough brown hair framed the face not unpicturesquely, and her cheek was tanned, without a freckle, and smooth as brown satin. Vividness and intelligence permeated the figure, and Claudia felt a little curiosity.

“I did not know any one was there; I was startled,” she continued. “Did you say you wish to speak to me?”

“If you please. There is a rock on this side of the hedge where you can sit down. I will not keep you long.” She spoke with grave brevity, and held the bushes apart for Claudia to pass through. The princess glanced doubtfully down at the muslin frock, but her mind was utterly weary of its own bitter reflections, and she caught at the promise of diversion. She followed Tatiana, therefore, through the hedge, and came out upon the rocks fronting the bay. Here she seated

herself on a slab indicated by the girl, and glanced toward her expectantly. Tatiana stood opposite her, boyishly, her hands behind her back, her foot braced against a stone. She met the princess's inquiring glance with one of equal steadiness.

"In the first place," she began clearly, "let me introduce myself. I believe we are connections. My name is Tatiana Sarrazine."

The princess's glance changed to one half sly, half incredulous, and her manner became at once distant and stiff.

"This is most interesting and—strange," she spoke, in her unresponsive voice, "but——"

"You do not believe it?"

"Really," said Claudia indifferently, "one could hardly be expected to, I think."

"I suppose not," Tatiana replied meditatively. "Yes, I suppose not. Perhaps you may recognise these?" And she drew from her pocket a small case containing two miniatures, which she opened and handed to

the princess. Claudia had often seen the faces it displayed.

"Certainly, I recognise the late Prince Sarrazine and his second wife," she said quickly.

"My parents," explained Tatiana. "I am said to look like my mother."

Claudia steadily surveyed the girl's face and the miniatures in turn. This done, she shut the case decisively and returned it. "You do look like her very much," said she. "I suppose I must believe you."

Tatiana bowed as she replaced the case. There was a short pause.

"It certainly is very odd," remarked the princess, in an evenly conversational tone; "very odd indeed! Have you been long in the neighbourhood?"

"Six weeks or more."

"Really! And I had not the slightest idea of it!"

"That was my intention, madame." The girl's manner, composed and almost dry, indefinitely annoyed Claudia.

“ You wish to talk over your affairs with me? ” she said, indifference predominating in her tone. “ Of course you know, my dear child, there is very little I can do for you. I can’t pretend to have approved your action ” —her voice took on a shade of light patronage as Tatiana remained silent—“ and, the truth is, you have committed social suicide. I’m awfully sorry for it (of course), but I fear prodigal daughters are not treated like prodigal sons.” She laughed a little. “ If there’s any little thing I can do for you I should be glad——”

“ Madame misunderstands my meaning,” Tatiana hastened to interrupt, in a tone as hard and light as Claudia’s own. “ I did not come to discuss my affairs, although I am much obliged for your interest. As for society and the social point of view, you might not realize, perhaps, that a Sarrazine——” She finished her sentence with a faint shrug and a glance seaward. The girl acted undoubtedly, but it was admirably done. Her entire personality, as she stood

there quietly, served to bear in upon Claudia's mind the fact that Mademoiselle Sarrazine was dealing with the American woman who had bought the family name. In her very composure, her eye, the inflection of her voice, there was delicately conveyed the attitude of the aristocrat toward the parvenue. Nothing could have more strongly appealed to Claudia's arrogance than this arrogance better founded, and the girl's dexterous use of it as a weapon gave her an instant ascendancy in the interview. Tatiana's quick wit could not have handled a person of Claudia's caliber better than by simply outdoing her.

"Probably in this country," the girl went on lightly; "still, one must guard one's social position. It would be, in the nature of things, a little undertermined, I can see that. But I really believe a Sarrazine could do as she pleases; don't you think so? However, I am not here to discuss it."

"Then pray make haste," said the princess shortly. "This rock is damp."

Tatiana faced her, and became at once simple and frank in manner.

"You see, madame," she began, "Bolislas used to come and talk to me, and——"

"He did, and never mentioned it?" said the princess. "I shall have something to say to Bolislas!"

"Oh, no! You know the attachment of our people to members of the family," Tatiana suggested. "Bolislas did as I told him. He used to be my groom at Varsovie. The Russian servants are so devoted!"

Claudia flushed a little, but said "Go on," in her ordinary even voice.

"Bolislas, madame, used to come at times when I was sketching (I am an artist), and even bring me sweetmeats or cake from your table. You must not scold him for that, poor old fellow; it was his custom when I was a child. One morning, now nearly three weeks ago, he ran down in a great hurry to give me some chocolate drops. He had put them into a pretty little pink box which he handed me. I was always afraid that he

might take something that he ought not, so I called after him, for he was already running back to the kitchen, to ask him where he got the box. He called back, 'Oh, mademoiselle need not be afraid! I picked it up from the floor of the princess's room. She intended to throw it away, for it was lying near the waste-paper basket.' "

Tatiana paused to glance curiously at her companion.

"Go on!" Claudia whispered. Her white, thin hands were twisted tightly together.

"I pushed open the box and found one compartment filled with chocolates, which I ate. The next day I pushed out the second compartment (which, by the way, stuck and was hard to open), but it did not contain chocolates." As Tatiana said this she put her hand to her throat and drew forth a thin gold chain, on which, as she held it out, Claudia saw the great pearl hanging. Her dry lips parted, but gave out no sound. The girl continued her story.

"At first I thought this was a jest, or a

valueless gift from poor Bolislas. Then I saw it was genuine, and realized that it must be the pearl I had heard of—the famous pierced pearl of Aguiras, which madame had been seen to wear. I dared not speak of it to Bolislas, for I soon saw that by a miracle he had not found it—he was ignorant of its being in the box. Wrapped as it was in cotton wool it had made no sound, and Bolislas, in a great hurry with his chocolates, had passed them into the end which opened easily, not seeing that inside there were two compartments. His haste and the little difficulty in opening the box further (which I found was caused by the cotton wool sticking in one or two places)—these two trifles kept him from the discovery. I do not myself understand how the box came upon the floor.”

“I think I do,” said Claudia. “I must have slipped it out of my cabinet with a number of others. I, too, was in a great hurry, and wore a dress with a train. Probably the box fell upon the train first, and was dragged

a little way across the room before falling on the carpet. The waste-paper basket stands near the door, and Bolislas empties it every morning. Oh, yes, it is quite clear!"

Her eyes were set upon the jewel swinging between Tatiana's fingers; seeing this, the girl detached it from the chain and handed it to her. Evidently Claudia started to utter thanks, but the touch of the pearl must have brought a rush of memories that caused her to forget the words as she bent over it.

"Madame must not ask me," Tatiana went on, in a low voice, "why I kept it so long—why it was not returned before. You must think as you will about that. I was perplexed, and not sure that it belonged to you at all, unable to decide if I ought not to return it to the rightful owner. Even now I do not feel certain that I have done right. There was no one to tell me——" She paused, and here, had Claudia chosen, a word might have won the girl.

But it was not the princess's character;

and, instead, she replied, in a tone of complete assurance, "Certainly; I paid for it!"

"So Mr. Carnegie told me," said Tatiana smoothly.

The princess jerked up her head, startled.

"Hugh? Do you mean to say he knew? Did Hugh——"

"You mean, that I had the pearl? Oh, no. But he told me about it, and you."

"So Hugh knew you were here?" said the princess in her hard way. "You met, I suppose."

"Often. It was what he told me," said Tatiana, with a touch of Carnegie's own smooth irony, "that made me decide to return it. I thought it ought to be yours, since you had paid so high for it."

Their eyes met, the girl's clear and scornful, the woman's sombre and desperate, and the latter dropped first.

"So he told you—that," said Claudia mechanically, and drawing a long, heavy breath.

"When I heard," Tatiana cried, with a

fierce irrelevance, "I was glad my parents were dead!"

She moved away a little, and a long silence followed. It had begun to grow dark, and the tide was coming in with a gentle, persistent sound.

"When Mr. Carnegie comes back," said Tatiana, at length, "I shall tell him you are content: you have your pearl of great price."

The lash of these words fell visibly upon the princess's face. But the first sentence served to obliterate it, and she eagerly raised her head.

"He is coming back?" Then, with an effort, "He was not—hurt?"

"No," Tatiana replied coldly, "he was not hurt." She waited a moment before she added: "It is growing late, and I must go back. I wish you good evening, madame."

The princess made no answer; indeed, she did not seem to hear. She sat bent over upon the rock, her cheek resting on one hand, the pearl lying in the hollow of the other palm. Her eyes were blank and fixed inward;

there was a dreadful rigidity about her whole figure. Her mouth hung a little open. Tatiana moved away to where her boat was fastened, and the princess took no notice. She repeated her farewell, but received no answer. The girl untied the painter, got in, and took up the oars, uncomfortable in the presence of the motionless figure. Far out in the bay she looked, saw the white dress where she had left it, and her blood began to creep. When Dora came down to help her beach the boat, Tatiana touched her with a cold hand.

“Oh, look!” she said. “Do you see anything, Dora? Is she still sitting there?”

The girls peered into the darkness, but the further shore was only a low, velvet-black line, where nothing could be distinguished, and the rush of the incoming tide shrouded every sound. There was a little chilly wind, too, and they shivered. “Let us run!” said Tatiana suddenly, and with one common touch of vague fear the two seized hands and ran home in the dark. Even to this day Tati-

ana cannot forget the figure, which in her sketchbook appears as a woman, hideous, huddled in the gloom, with head thrust forward and unseeing eyes. It seems to her imagination that she was involuntarily present at the reaping of the whirlwind, a task which, though each of us has a similar harvest in life, is rarely undergone in the presence of another.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RETURN OF THE NEREID.

THE day following Tatiana's conversation with the princess was foggy, with occasional bursts of rain, and she judged it no longer necessary to keep watch on the Château Gui. The Spaniards had gone, and her own particular errand had been accomplished. The next day it had cleared again and was soft and sparkling; after luncheon she took her boat to reconnoitre. She was on shore among the alders, which shook wet diamonds all over her as she crushed through them, when her ears were startled by the distinct, unmistakable "boom!" of a gun in salute. She parted the leaves and looked eagerly seaward, to see a little iron-gray boat come up the harbour at a businesslike rate of speed, like a hound on the scent. Then the air

shook to another "boom!" and the white Nereid followed her gray companion, stately, but with that intentness of purpose which only a steam yacht has among manufactured things. The two swung round, anchored, and despatched little launches from their sides which scudded over the water in a great hurry to the stone pier. Then Tatiana saw a hasty council among the figures on the pier, and the gray gunboat's launch set off toward her again, with the blue-and-white uniform of an ensign in the stern. A group of several men was left standing upon the pier, among whom Carnegie could be easily distinguished. With the thought in her mind that she had best get her boat and go home, Tatiana walked rapidly toward the group on the pier, and as she drew nearer she was puzzled to see a long, narrow object, wrapped in black, being slowly hoisted from the gig to the wharf. By the care the sailors took to do this it was evidently something both of weight and value.

Her heart beat a little as she drew nearer.

She saw one of the men touch Carnegie on the arm, and call his attention to her approach. Carnegie, with a joyful exclamation, doffed his cap and strode to meet her, followed at a few paces by a tall man with a blond beard.

“How are you? Are you all right?” Carnegie called out as he advanced. She nodded, smiling, and he continued to the tall man, who had now joined him, “Barstow, let me introduce you to Mademoiselle Sarrazine, without whose help I should never have succeeded in escaping!”

“So I have heard you say,” rejoined Randal Barstow, and shook Tatiana warmly by the hand. The three were standing alone on the pier now, for two sailors, having landed the object mentioned, retired to the steam launch, which was moored to the wharf. The girl forgot her intention of going home at once as she looked eagerly up into the faces of the two men.

“You were successful—you recovered them?” she asked, breathless.

"My papers?" answered Carnegie, his hand on Barstow's shoulder. "Yes; thanks to Randal here, they are by this time safe in Washington."

"And the Señorita?"

"Is in Boston harbor rather the worse for wear."

"But the Spaniards, and the spy Jacoby?"

A grave look on Carnegie's face checked her, and following his gesture she turned her wondering eyes toward the object now lying on the dock. Through the thick folds of black stuff its outlines were plainly defined as those of a man's body, unmistakably rigid.

Tatiana understood. "Oh!" said she, under her breath, "poor d'Arcos!"

The two men were silent. Presently she asked: "And you are none of you hurt?"

"Not one of us. Sit down here, mademoiselle, and I will tell you everything that happened."

"Yes, I must hear!" she said, obeying him. Barstow seated himself by her side, and

Carnegie leaned against one of the supports of the pier as he began:

“ You see, mademoiselle, I knew the Señorita did not have enough coal to take her very far. D’Arcos must have expected to get an extra supply at the château, but he failed in that. And why in the world he set sail at all will always remain one of the mysteries. We shall never know what was the meaning of the raid.”

“ And the more I think of it,” broke in Barstow, “ the more utterly absurd, vain, and ineffectual it seems!”

“ I agree with you,” Carnegie went on; “ but let me remind you that we do not, and now can not, know what was in his mind. Anyhow, d’Arcos had stolen my yacht——”

“ Captured!” suggested Barstow with a twinkle.

“ If you like. Do let a fellow tell his story in his own way, old man! I say, captured my yacht and *stolen* my papers—a detailed examination and report of the New England coast defence, prepared with full

diagrams and maps—which he had been scheming to obtain. What he expected to do with them, the Lord—that is, the arch fiend—only knows!

“Well, our first move after I came on board the Nereid was to run into Portsmouth. The commandant of the fort there happens to be a personal friend of mine, and by his influence we got the patrol gunboat *Bar Harbor* detailed to go with us in the search for my yacht. Meanwhile, I had picked up clues enough to guide me as to direction, and was pretty well assured that the *Señorita* was running south. To make a long story short, mademoiselle, we came up with the *Señorita*, steaming along pretty slowly. By the way, I knew that they had not captured her engineer, as he was ashore at the moment, and I guessed they would have trouble with her engines. I found out later how correct I was, and it is astonishing the amount of damage they have contrived to do in so short a time! When we sighted the *Señorita* the Nereid was ahead, and, finding

they could not outsteam her, they opened fire upon us from the deck. According to orders, the Nereid kept quiet, until the gun-boat ran up and sailed into the fight. Two shells from her one-pounders were enough to show them that resistance was pure folly. So they hauled up a white flag, and we went aboard. The men were on their knees, crying and begging us not to kill them, but d'Arcos was not among his ruffians. Barstow and I went down into the cabin to look for him. We found him soon enough, rigged out in my yachting clothes, if you please, sitting at the saloon table, stone dead. He must have gone down there when the gun-boat fired and he saw that it was all up. The bottle of poison stood on the table in front of him. Poor devil! I found my papers in a tin box in the cabin, and took them on board the Nereid. Then she towed the Señorita till our men tinkered up her engines enough to run her back to Boston. That's all."

As he made an end, Carnegie's eyes rested

once more on the body lying on the dock, and he said again, "Poor devil!" The manner of the man's death had somehow impressed him.

Tatiana was the first to break the pause. "Then you have neither of you an explanation of the whole affair?"

Barstow shook his head, and Carnegie repeated: "No one will ever know, now, the reason for it. What they attempted was utterly useless to them, and they must have known it. Why d'Arcos made such an elaborate scheme to get the papers and the yacht, what he expected to do with them when he got them, how far he was authorized, and why his time was wasted on such a profitless and vain attempt—these will always remain puzzles. You can make guesses if you like. Perhaps he was a sincere enemy and patriot, acting on his own behalf; perhaps he was merely a spy acting under instructions."

"Perhaps he had privateering comrades hidden somewhere or other," Tatiana suggested.

“Or perhaps the whole affair from beginning to end was mere theatricals—‘bluff,’” was Barstow’s comment.

“Perhaps,” agreed Carnegie. “Whatever it was, it was foredoomed from the first to futility and failure. That’s what I don’t understand. But what’s the use? These are eternal mysteries, and personally I am glad to give them up. Certainly the last fortnight has given me enough excitement to have a good, solid, logical cause for it!”

“My own opinion,” laughed Barstow, “is that Carnegie has had a unique experience. He has been in the thick of the only thing the enemy did during the war of 1898—the celebrated capture of the Château Gui!”

“We are forgetting the princess,” said Carnegie, and Tatiana glanced from one to the other, startled.

“You are not—” she began, and something in the faces checked her. “I must go home,” she ended lamely, and stood up.

Carnegie went with her to the rowboat.

"By the way," he told her, in an undertone, "d'Arcos did not have the pearl after all. I wonder what he did with it?"

"He never had it!" said Tatiana, flushing to her eyes. "The princess has it again. I restored it to her."

"You?"

His tone and glance of deep amazement caused her to add hurriedly: "I will tell you all about it presently. I—I have seen and talked with her. Oh, Mr. Carnegie, if you had been there! Do not be too harsh!"

"Do you realize her position?" he asked constrainedly. "There is still such a crime as treason in the world."

"I know. She tried to give you up, and show them your papers, but perhaps——"

"Let us talk about it some other time," interposed Carnegie, who felt unable just then to lay bare the secret springs of Claudia's action. "When am I to see you again? Will you meet me on the path to The Lodges—say at four?"

"I will try to be there," she replied, with-

out raising her eyes, and gave the rowboat a vigorous push from the wharf. Carnegie, with the sense that something unpleasant must be got over, turned back to join Barstow, and both walked briskly toward the Château Gui.

“A charming girl—Mademoiselle Sarrazine,” observed Barstow; “a connection of the princess, I presume?”

But Carnegie did not appear to hear this remark, and they arrived at the house before Barstow had time to repeat it.

The front door stood open, Barstow and Carnegie entered together, and at the first step the latter gave an exclamation under his breath. “Skipped, I’ll wager!” said he.

The hall was in process of being dismantled. The rugs were up, the pictures were down, the tall clock was swathed in sack-ing. A noise of tack hammers and voices came from the upper region, and Bolislas, with a tray full of china, was passing down the stairs. At sight of Carnegie a broad smile spread across his flat face.

"Where's your mistress?" was the sharp question.

"Monsieur is quite well?" asked the polite Bolislas, and waved his hand toward the drawing-room. Carnegie entered, to find Miss Vesey and François standing over a packing box. The little Englishwoman's cap was awry, and she held a written list in one hand. When she saw Carnegie she gave a slight scream.

"Why, where did you come from?" said she, sitting down on the edge of the packing box. "Claudia will be so disappointed!"

"The princess has gone?"

"Left yesterday morning in all that rain," exclaimed Miss Vesey, "for Halifax. She took Varinka, and left me to pack up with Bolislas. She decided to try crossing from Canada this time."

"Oh!" was all Carnegie replied.

"I don't think this air agreed at all with the dear princess, Mr. Carnegie! She was far from well; and we talked it over, and came to the conclusion that she had better leave

for Hamburg at once. Hamburg always suits her, you know."

Carnegie smiled at the "we" in this speech. He knew Claudia's fashion of issuing her commands.

"Indeed!" said he.

Miss Vesey looked around her in despair. "I am so sorry—and you know she will be! You see what a state we are in! So, after all, you did go yachting with M. Jacoby?"

"I suppose so," Carnegie smiled. "Don't give yourself any trouble, Miss Vesey! I hoped to see the princess; that's all."

"And is M. Jacoby with you?" she inquired, straightening her cap.

"He is," said Carnegie; "but the truth is, Miss Vesey, he's dead! Can you lend me François to help bury him?" And, seeing by her expression that she thought he had suddenly gone crazy, he added: "I'll explain, but is it possible that you don't know what has been going on? She is even cleverer than I thought if she hoodwinked you in the very house!"

Her bewildered ejaculations, however, showed such to have been the case. The entire drama had passed under her very eyes without her seeing or suspecting anything. Cláudia's ascendancy over her, Claudia's dexterous explanations, had led Miss Vesey blindfold through the affair. Chance had aided in an important item, for it ordered that Miss Vesey should have spent that morning at the farm during which Carnegie had made his escape across the lawn. She was naturally much shocked and agitated by the story they told her, and the explanation, with various other duties, kept Carnegie steadily occupied until nearly four o'clock.

At last, however, he was able to get away, and to set out once again on that row across the bay, which he had undertaken before in such various circumstances and so many moods. This last time, as he took up the oars, he was conscious that the sense of strain which had lain about the place ever since his first appearance there had finally vanished. The enigmas, the excitements, the

perils, had evaporated into air; and what was left was merely the beauty of the wild spot and isolated house, the crisp quality of the atmosphere, the delight of mountain, sky, and sea. It might have been any part of that wonderful coast, and Carnegie any young man on the commonest if the most exciting of all errands.

He landed and walked through the birch wood, realizing as he walked that he was destined, apparently, never to take that path in a leisurely manner. However on this occasion his pulses may have raced, he yet seemed to observe more of its beauty. The slanting sun rays entered the wood and broke against the white trunks like a sea. A humblebee passed, thrumming the string of his 'cello. Light and shade fell checkered, green and golden, and looking upon them he saw something move and glisten brown in the sunbeams.

She sat upon a fallen trunk, her hands folded, and awaited him very serenely. No adequate excitement, thought Carnegie,

lurked in her eye. He drew near and she greeted him, and was full of questions, and they talked briskly and easily for half an hour on such trivial matters as the princess and poor d'Arcos, and the probabilities of peace. Then there came one of those pauses which is like the opening of a door.

"So Peter Brent is gone?" said Carnegie, glancing at her dress.

"Don't you like it better?"

"I hardly know. It makes me afraid."

"You need not be."

"You see, I know him better than I do Mademoiselle Sarrazine."

"But it has been Mademoiselle Sarrazine all along!"

"True." Then Carnegie asked in a lower tone, and somewhat hurriedly: "Are you at all glad to have me back?"

"Yes," replied Tatiana, in the same way; "I think I am."

There followed a long silence, in which something—it is hard to say what—took place. Certainly they turned and looked

each into the eyes of the other, and Carnegie began to speak, intensely and seriously, as though he had gotten all through the preliminaries. But there had been no preliminaries—in language.

“You must have seen that long before I knew it was *you* I began to care. I cared when I made that ridiculous proposition to send you to college. Don’t you see I did, Tatiana? Don’t you care a little?”

She was perhaps one of the simplest of human beings, for she answered him, after a pause, “Not—a little!” and then hastened to qualify this speech: “I shouldn’t have shown you that I did, as I did; and oh! you oughtn’t to marry a runaway who’s committed social suicide, and——”

The touch of arms about her swept away all these remonstrances in a sudden bewilderment of joy. She stopped speaking with a gasp; and when, some ten minutes later, Carnegie said “Nonsense!” presumably in answer to her remarks, her eyes were still soft and shining with a wonderful emotion.

The twilight came stealthily upon them in the birch wood, a steadily marching army of shadows routed the last sunbeams, but they had light enough to see each other's eyes. Among many things she said gravely: "You must let me write to my uncle in England at once, and arrange to go to them. They must not say that you have made a mistake!"

"You shall go where you choose, for I shall go too," replied he; "and you shall do as you like so that you marry me in the autumn!"

Then, as it had begun to grow really dark, they started to climb the path to The Lodges together, and came finally out upon the mountain side under the stars, where Dora waited ready to welcome them.

CONCLUSION.

I.

Extract from the *Lady's Pictorial*, October 17, 1898.

CARNEGIE — SARRAZINE.—On October 10th, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, assisted by the Very Rev. the Dean of Canterbury, D. D., and the Rev. Wilfred Greville, Rector of St. Mary's, Aldermansbury (cousin of the bride), Hugh Carnegie, Esq., of New York, U. S. A., son of the late Carter Carnegie, to the Princess Tatiana Alexandrovna Sarrazine, only daughter of H. S. H. the late Prince Sarrazine and the late Princess Feodora Sarrazine. The bride was given away by her uncle, Sir George Greville, of the Manor House, Aldermansbury, Herts, and No. 9 Carlton House Terrace, and

was attired in a travelling dress of dark blue broadcloth. The ceremony was extremely quiet, and there were no bridesmaids. The best man was Randal Barstow, Esq., of New York. After the ceremony a small wedding breakfast took place at the residence of Sir George Greville, No. 9 Carlton House Terrace, and the happy pair left that same afternoon for Italy, where the honeymoon will be spent. A circumstance of unusual interest lay in the fact that the bride, whose girlhood was passed on the family estates, had never been formally presented. The young couple met during a visit of the bride to her sister-in-law, the Princess Claudia Sarrazine (Claudia Ivors, of Hartford, U. S. A.), in America, and despite some opposition their engagement was followed by a speedy marriage. Naturally it was a matter of regret to both that the Princess Sarrazine (who is also a cousin of the bridegroom) was unable to be present at the ceremony, but the charming princess is still in Paris, slowly recovering from an attack of nervous pros-

tration. The presents were numerous and handsome. Lady Greville wore, etc.

II.

Letter from Señor Juan Maria Aguiras, Havana, to Hugh Carnegie, Esq., Venice, Italy, October 25, 1898.

MY DEAR CARNEGIE: It was only yesterday that I heard the unexpected news of your marriage. Here, from my exile—for exile it is, though the capital of my desolated country, amid my toils and anxieties—I send the warm wishes of my heart for your happiness! Perhaps at some future day, when the work of patriotic reconstruction is so far accomplished as to leave me the leisure I now lack, we may meet again, and I may have the honour of a presentation to your wife. During our intimate talks last summer at The Lodges I never heard you mention the name of la belle Russe, yet you must have been sure of my sympathy on so important a subject. Why, then, did you withhold me your confidence?

By the way, let me take this opportunity to thank you for your aid in the capture of that infamous spy d'Arcos, who gave us both so much anxiety. My influence at Washington, as you are aware, was the means of despatching a cruiser—the Brooklyn, I think—to apprehend him. He had stolen somebody's yacht with which to carry away my pearl, and doubtless thought to circumvent us. But, the saints be praised! I frustrated his plots, and I am proud to stretch out my hand to a comrade who, I am told, was in at the death! May you be blessed, my friend, for your noble efforts on behalf of the oppressed!

Since my arrival at Havana I have heard with surprise that my family heirloom is still in the possession of your relative. I shall take legal measures to recover it at once—that is, when I have a moment to think of *self*. For we are standing on the borders of a great era, in which it is my ambition to be written “as one who loves his fellow-men.” You remember that I ever loved your

English poets; may their strains nerve me to
the work in hand!

In fellowship, my dear Carnegie, I kiss
your hands.

JUAN MARIA AGUIRAS.

P. S.—Of course I shall not commence
proceedings against the princess until I hear
she has entirely recovered from her ill-
ness. Whatever may be my necessities, I re-
main an Aguiras!

J. M. A.

THE END.

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